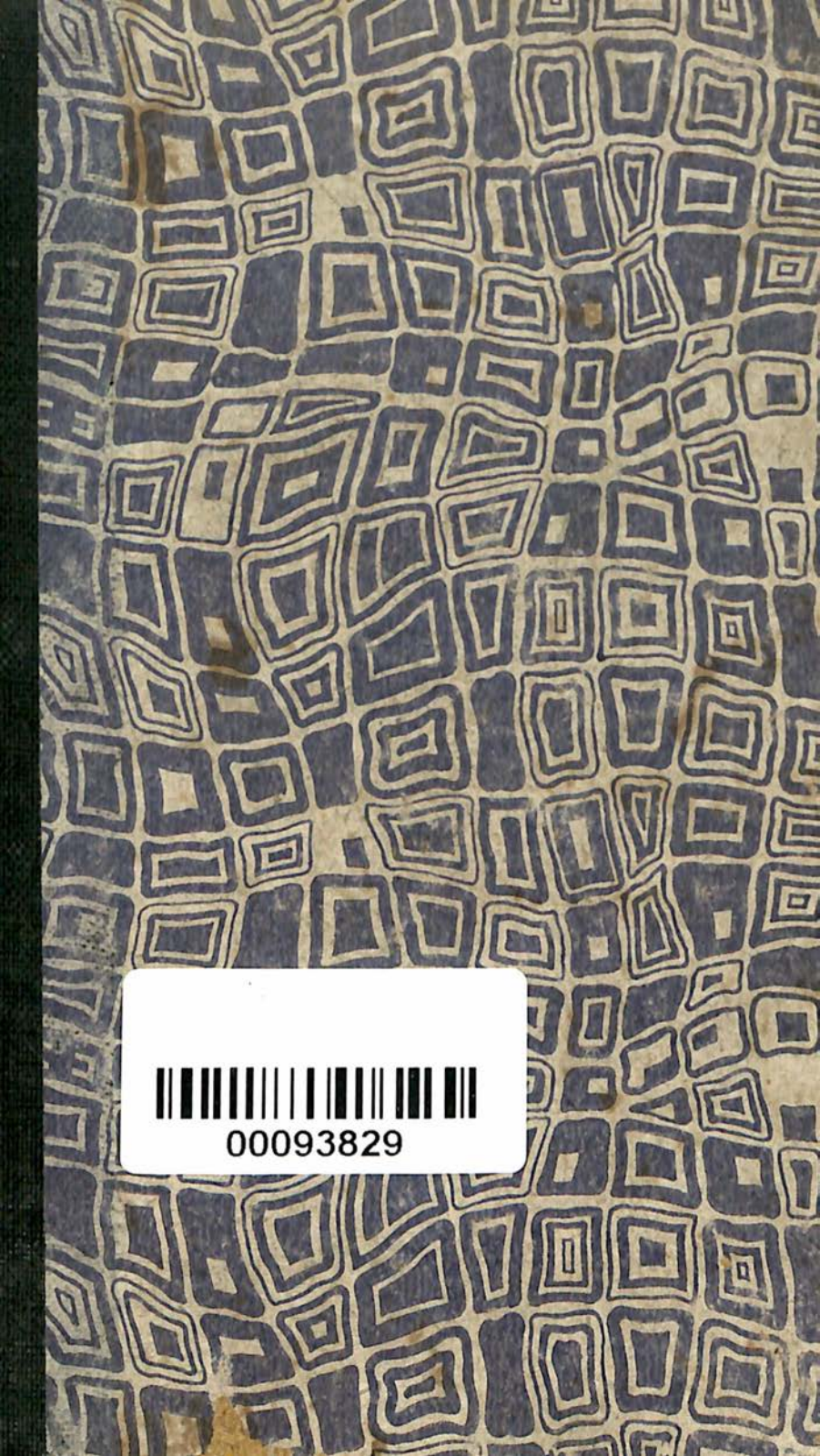
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THE

HISTORY AND POETRY

OF THE

SCOTTISH BORDER:

THEIR MAIN FEATURES AND RELATIONS.

93829

By JOHN VEITCH, LL.D.,

PROFESSOR OF LOGIC AND RHETORIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

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PREFACE.

In this volume I do not propose to write a complete history of the Scottish Border, or even to give the series of its picturesque episodes. I have sought mainly to trace the outlines of Border History, to give in the order of development its salient characteristics, and to show how these, in connection with the scenery of the district, have issued in its rich and stirring ballad and song. Many an evening of poring over old documents this volume has cost me; and many a day, under lowering as well as sunny skies, have I spent in seeing for myself the scenes of the historical and traditional incidents. There is thus hardly one name of a place in this volume which is not to me a vivid impression. I cannot expect the majority of readers, or even many of them, to share the intensity of feeling which the associa-

tions connected with those names create in my mind; but there is, I trust, enough of historical delineation, and enough of the poetry peculiar to the Border Land, to enable the reader to follow, with some interest, its life of the past, and to feel the spirit of its song.

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BORDER HISTORY AND POETRY.

I.

THE BORDER COUNTRY—THE SCENERY—THE NAMES OF PLACES AND NATURAL OBJECTS—ANGLO-SAXON, SCANDINAVIAN, CYMRIC.

THE district which stretches from the Firth of Forth, and from the line of the Wall of Antonine southwards to the shores of the Solway and the Irish Sea, has long borne the name of The Lowlands of Scotland. Occasionally, and more definitely, it has been called The Southern Lowlands. *Lowland*, as thus applied, is an epithet used broadly to distinguish this part of the country from the greater heights of the northern Highlands, and the term is not particularly appropriate. There is no doubt a large plain on the northern boundary extending along the Firths of Forth and Clyde to the Western Sea; and here and there within the district itself are long stretches of haugh or flat land. But any one who views the region from one of its higher hills will be struck with the predominating mountainous appearance of the country, and will almost

wonder how it can support the population it does. There are aspects of it thus seen which may even tempt one to put the question as to how man has come to secure a footing amid its wilds at all. Its most prominent feature is the great back-bone of hills, which stretches from Loch Ryan on the south-west to St. Abb's Head on the north-east, cut across now and again by a water-course, but still fairly continuous from sea to sea. These occupy by themselves and their offshoots the greater part of the area of the region. In Galloway and in Tweeddale they rise to a height of upwards of 2,700 feet, and for long miles of country they are more than 2,000 feet above sea-level. The district has thus appropriately been called *The Southern Uplands.* By peculiarities of physical feature, by a very ancient history, by fusion of races, by language and social manners, by the written and unwritten poetry of its people, these southern uplands have so influenced the whole history of Scotland, that without considering them we cannot understand our present nationality, nor would that nationality have been as it is.

It is with a part of this district that I propose at present mainly to deal. This is the valley of the Tweed and its tributaries. The Tweed is, for a considerable part of its course, the dividing line between the northern and southern parts of Britain, between Scotland and England. The valley through which it flows, and the glens watered by its tributary streams, form the main

area of the Border District. If to these we add the valleys of the Liddel and the Esk, we have what was characteristically the Border Land of Scotland, the land of foray and feud, the land of hostile inroad from England, of hostile aggression in return, all through the Middle Ages down to the Union of the Crowns. For wherever the final battle-field was pitched in Scotland, the Southerner, unless he had come by sea, which was rare, had already left mark of brand and sword on his way through the pastoral haughs and green glens made beautiful by the Tweed, the Teviot, and the Liddel. The Tweed, besides being, for a considerable way, the boundary-line between the two kingdoms, at least since the Middle Ages, is, looking to its course from the wilds of Tweedsmuir, the bright centre of the Lowland country. Historically the river has been even its heart, so far at least as strong bold action, the gradual growth of history, tradition, legend, the continuous flow of song, ballad, and music, wholly native, have moved the feelings and moulded the imagination, not only of the people of the district, but of the whole land of Scotland.

But we must first of all try to get a view of the natural features of this district of the Tweed and its tributaries, for natural features help to make and mould the character of the people, and, directly or indirectly, give a cast and colouring to those feelings, fancies, and imaginings that find outlet in song and ballad.

A very ordinary acquaintance with geology enables one

to see that the district through which flow the Tweed, the Yarrow, and the Teviot is a part, in fact the central part, of that old Silurian or greywacke system of rock that stretches from Loch Ryan on the south-west to St. Abb's Head on the north-east, from the Western Sea to the German Ocean. Long ago this region was wholly, or in great part, under the ocean, and where the highest hills now catch the first glimmer of the early sun, the waves broke in foam, and sea-birds shrieked and flew amid the war of waters. The district is an old sea-bed, first worked upon and smoothed by the waves; then, raised into dry land, it was carved and shaped during long ages by rains and rivers and frost, their quieter work being hastened when in recurrent periods the land presented a great surface of ice and snow. At length there came a time when, instead of one unbroken ice-surface, glaciers only lay on the greater heights, particularly at the head of Talla and Winterhope, Polmood and Manor. The melting of the ice, and the streams from the glaciers, the influence of rain and wind, of frost and mountain spring, of burn and water-flow, supervening, through a countless series of years, upon the original action of the sea, scooped and hollowed the old sea plain into glens and hopes, rounded and smoothed the hill-tops and hill-sides, left them here scaured red and deep, and there rich in pastoral green, gave us wavy lines of hills as if arrested in water-flow, gave us, finally, the district we live in as the product of the sculpture of the unseen powers of those long gone years.

The Silurian rock, of which these hills are composed, is of the lower or older kind, next in antiquity to the Cambrian and Laurentian. It is the basis of the whole strata of the district, and any subsequent deposit at later periods, such as sandstone, has been laid in the hollows scooped out of this primitive rock. But indeed there is very little of any such strata. The land is now very much as it was left by the sea, and as it has been shaped by ice, water, and sub-atmospheric influences since the earliest geological period. The oldest of the streams are those, such as the Biggar, the Lyne, and the Eddlestone, which flow from the north-west to the south-east before joining the Tweed. These run through the transverse valleys of the district, and are, as a rule, the most featureless and the least interesting in scenery. The Tweed, from its source in Tweed's Well, about a hundred miles from the sea, flows from south-west to north-east, and cuts its channel through the bare Silurian rock, passing clearly in stream and pool over its bed of water-worn stones. When it bursts from the hills to the plain below Melrose, and then flows through a rich well-wooded strath to the sea, it touches on later strata as yet undenuded. These are the upper form of the Old Red Sandstone and the subsequent Carboniferous deposit. In parts of the Cheviots we find isolated patches of volcanic rock. The lowlands of Dumfriesshire are also Carboniferous, and we have the coal beds of the Lothians. But the Silurian is the true ground-frame of the district of the

Tweed and its tributaries; and this shows very little of the covering of subsequent geological strata. It appears in truth, except for the grass, the heather, and the wild flowers of the hills, very much as it was left by the sea and the ice of innumerable ages ago. Since the Silurian rocks were first laid down as mud and sand beneath the sea, they have been hardened, crushed, elevated into ridges, smoothed by the sea, carved by rain and rivers, and then covered by water from which sediments were laid down. These were again removed by the joint work of sea and atmosphere, but chiefly by the latter, for while the fuller list of English strata tells of repeated submersion of that region, in Scotland there is little sign that the country was under water between the Carboniferous and the Pleistocene period, the last great glacial epoch of Europe. Since then 200,000 years have elapsed. This epoch is thus, geologically, a recent one. But the enormous lapse of time since the Carboniferous period may well account for the denudation, the rounding, smoothing, and the wavy sculpture of the hills, which they now present to the eye. Professor Young of Glasgow has shown in a most interesting paper the extent of the glacier remains in upper Tweeddale, and that these are not found at a lower elevation than 1,000 feet above the sea-level. These bare greywacke heights and haughs, unblessed by aught of late geological bounty or luxuriance, have had a great deal to do in making and moulding the hardy, sinewy men who have lived among them for the

many hundred years of British and Scottish story. But we may probably also be grateful that, while there was little to enrich the human nature there, the grey hills have helped at least to quicken and nourish the pathos and the quiet reverence of the heart.

In the earliest historic time the district was no doubt covered by wood. It was a forest wherever wood could grow. There were hazel, fir, and oak—there were rowan and ash, and willow, alder, birch, and aspen by the streams. The channel of the water at Manorhead shows alternate sand and peat-moss, and inlaid there are birken boles, more than 1,000 feet above sea-level. Down through the time of the Stewarts, the district was a well-wooded shelter for hart and hind, for doe and roe—

> "Ettricke foreste is a feir foreste,
> In it grows many a semelie trie;
> There's hart and hynd, and dae and rae,
> And of a' wild bestis grete plentie.
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> The king was comin' through Caddon Ford,
> And full five thousand men was he;
> They saw the derke foreste them before,
> They thought it awesome for to see." *

The reference here is without doubt to the early part of the sixteenth century, to the time of James IV. ere he went to Flodden. The forest of Meggat or Rodono on one occasion yielded 500 head of game—bird and beast of

* *The Outlaw Murray.*

chase—and at another time eighteen score of deer, as late as the days of James V. and Mary.

Early in this century "a person of quality" from England, having visited Tweeddale, was asked on his return home to describe the district. His answer was that this was easy enough; it could be done in three words—"a Hill, a Road, and a Water." This brief account was no doubt very characteristic of the district at that period; for in the early part of the century there was almost nothing but natural wood, and very little of that, except at Neidpath and Dawyck. Some birks, hazels, and rowans clustered on the hill-sides, and in the glens beside the burn-pools; and, as now, there were some alders by the Tweed. Since then there has been a great deal of planting, but, unfortunately, not of a commendable sort. Most of the plantations are absolutely monotonous, wholly fir or larch, unrelieved by the slightest mixture of other trees. Here and there, particularly on the heights that surround the House of Dawyck, there appear, as the product of a cultured yet natural taste, woods rich in variety of leafage, and set in wonderfully harmonious outlines. But, taking the valley as a whole, it was more pleasing to the eye in last century, ere the hand of man had touched and marred it. The slopes of the hills that ran down to the great haugh of the Tweed were, as yet, green pastoral braes, unbroken by plough and harrow, and unadorned by masses of larch poles, each looking like a half-opened umbrella in summer, and the whole like a

dull brown blanket in autumn. The heights of the district did not then show as if they had been curiously patched in needy places by bits of cloth different from their original garment, and they were free from shapes of wood that now look like arms *minus* bodies, again like bodies *minus* arms, now like a tadpole, and then like a soup ladle. The people of last century were spared appearances of this sort, and instead of these they had simply hills, roads, and waters. We may, however, in an æsthetical interest, be thankful that, notwithstanding unshapely planting and ambitious uptearing of the hill-sides, the salient features of Tweeddale are still the natural ones—"the Hills and the Waters." To get a picture in our mind of the district, we must take up these, and combine them; and the best way of doing this is to get actually or in imagination to the summit of our highest main ridge of hills. Let us suppose, then, that we have got somehow to the top of Broad Law, which is 2,754 feet above sea-level. We are now on the summit of the range of mountains of the greatest average height in the south of Scotland. The range is seen to run eastward, with the valley of the Tweed on the north, and that of the Meggat on the south, through the heights of Cramalt Craig, Dun Law, and Dollar Law. At the Dollar Law, it branches to the north-east through Pykestone and Scrape, until it disappears in the haugh of the Tweed at Barns; and at the same point it slopes round Manorhead to the south-east, and rises gradually into the series of hills which run from the

head of Glengaber Burn, under the names of the Blackhouse and Hundleshope Heights, and branch off at the head of Glensax through the Dun Rig into the Newby ridge; having the valley of the Yarrow on the south, and that of the Manor on the north. This high mountain land is the back-bone of Tweeddale. From it flow, to the north-east, its principal glens and streams; and from it, in the course of ages, have been worn down by water those alluvial deposits that make the fertile haugh-land of the valley of the Tweed, and the rich verdure in the hollows of the waters and burns.

Once on the summit of the height, we find immediately around us a vast level plain, with short and scanty herbage, chiefly hill-mosses and lichens. All trace and feeling of man, of planting, ploughing, building, have disappeared. We are absolutely alone—alone with earth and sky, save for the occasional cry of a startled sheep and the summer hum of insects on the hill-top—

> "That undefined and mingled hum,
> Voice of the desert, never dumb."

Here and there a very tiny yellow-faced tormentilla, a very slender blue-eyed harebell, or a modest hill violet, peeps timorously out on the barrenness, like an orphan that has strayed on the wild. But we look around us from this great height, and what strikes the eye? On all sides, but particularly to the east of us, innumerable rounded broad

hill-tops run in series of parallel flowing ridges, chiefly from the south-west to the north-east, and between the ridges we note that there is enclosed in each a scooped-out glen, in which we know that a burn or water flows. These hill-tops follow each other in wavy outline. One rises, flows, falls, passes softly into another. This again rises, flows, and passes into another beyond itself; and thus the eye reposes on the long soft lines of a sea of hills, whose tops move and yet do not move, for they carry our vision along their undulating flow, themselves motionless, lying like an earth-ocean in the deep, quiet calm of their statuesque beauty.

Near us are the heads of the burns, and the heads of the glens, which, on the one hand, run northward to the Tweed, and on the other southward to the Yarrow. Here, at one burn-head, we have deep, peaty bogs, out of which ooze black trickling rills; there, at another, we have a well-eye, fringed with bright mosses, and fair forget-me-not of purer hue and more slender form than any that the valley can show. The burn gathers strength and makes its way down through a deep red-scaur and amid grey-bleached boulder stones; then, overshadowed by the boughs of a solitary rock-rooted birch, leaps through a sunny fall to a strong, deep eddying pool. At length it reaches the hollow of the glen, where it winds round and round, amid links of soft green pasture, amid sheen of bracken and glow of heather, passes a solitary herd's house — the only

symbol of human life there—now breaks against a dark-grey opposing rock, then spreads itself out before the sunlight in soft music amid its stones. Finally, leaving the line of hills that shut in the glen on each side, the stream mingles with one of the waters of the south, or with the Tweed itself on the north of the central range of mountains.

But the question arises: What of the people who have lived in the past in this district? Were they of more than one race, and, if so, what were those races?

With this point in view, we may look first at the oldest and rudest relics of human work in the district. The lower hills are pretty numerously crowned with the remains of circular and oval forts, called popularly *Rings* and *Camps*. These were originally places of dwelling and defence. Sometimes the area of the enclosure is surrounded by a single mound of stone and earth, and a ditch. In other cases there are as many as three or four circumvallations, with corresponding fosses or ditches. In some instances the appearance of the fort or dwelling indicates that it has been occupied by people at different times, and with different ideas of fort-making. But the situation almost universally shows that these strongholds were meant for the defence of the valleys that opened upon the Tweed. They were in fact the last retreats of the Cymri of the Tweed and the Clyde, the points at which, amid the wilds of the Southern Uplands, they made their final but unsuccessful efforts against Pict, Scot, and Saxon.

Then we find now and again under ground a rude slab-formed grave or *cist*, in which the body has evidently been set in a half-upright sitting posture; the weak, mouldering remains seeming in painful contrast to the once stalwart frame of the hunter on the hills. On hill-sides and on moors, in fields and unfrequented spots, we have the Standing-Stones, sometimes single, sometimes two together, with perhaps a third that has fallen by their side. Of these some were doubtless boundary stones, called *har*, or *her*, as in the south of England. We have *Harstane* not unfrequently as the name of a place. Others may mark a battle or a grave. When two or three are found together, they are probably the remains of what is known in Celtic as *cromlech*, or burying-place. The cromlech was a chamber of rough unhewn stones, formed generally of three upright and one laid flat on the top, resembling the covering of a table, hence called *dolmen* in France. In the south of England there is evidence that these chambers formed the centre of a mound of earth, when there was sufficient soil at hand to be got, or of earth and stones, or of small stones merely. The soil which formed the covering mound being removed, the rude slab-formed chamber is, in most cases, all that is left.

The earthen mound or *tumulus*, as a sepulchral monument, is not so common in the Lowlands of Scotland as the *cairn* or heap of stones unmixed with earth. In Cymric the term for it is *carn* and *carnedd*, hence our *cairn*. In

Anglo-Saxon it is *low (hlæw)* and *barrow (beorh, bearw)*. The long-shaped barrow is supposed to be the oldest, and the work of a race akin to the Basque or Iberian, which had spread over the whole of Britain prior to the Celtic. The skulls found in barrows of this sort are long-shaped. The round barrow, in which the skulls are broad-shaped or oval, are regarded as belonging to the Celtic people. In Tweeddale the remaining sepulchral monuments seem to be chiefly, if not altogether, of Celtic origin.

In the absence, however, of a thorough, careful, and skilled examination of those remains in the valley of the Tweed, and of their contents, we cannot come to any very precise conclusions about them. Meanwhile we must seek a more definite source of information. This will be found most ready to hand in the names of places and of natural features of the country. These are frequently the symbols of races of men, which witness for them when they are gone, and there is neither memory nor trace of their homes or their graves.

Any one who scans an Ordnance Map of the valley of the Tweed will readily be impressed with the fact that the great proportion of the names there is Teutonic. The dwelling-places of men, the most of the smaller streams or burns, the shaws, the muirs, and the lower hills bear Teutonic appellations.* It is, however, by no means an easy matter

* Compare Murray's *Dialect of the South of Scotland*, p. 16.

to assign to each of the different branches of the Teutonic language its share of those names. The received view is that by far the greater part is Anglo-Saxon—that they belong to that branch of the Low German which springs directly from the Gothic, and, along with Anglo-Saxon, includes the Frisian and Dutch. This I believe to be true in the main; but I am inclined to think that there is a larger proportion of local words attributable to the Norse or Scandinavian branch of the Teutonic language than is commonly supposed. "Extremely few places," says Worsaæ, "with Scandinavian names are to be found in the Scottish Lowlands, and even these are confined almost without exception to the counties nearest the Border. Dumfriesshire, lying directly north of Cumberland and the Solway, forms the central point of such places."* This may be true, and yet hardly affect the point at issue. The names of dwelling-places of men are, for very obvious reasons, the most changeable of all. In order fully to ascertain the proportion of the designations assignable to different languages or branches of the same language in a country, we must look rather to the names of natural objects and natural features, as hill, stream, and plain, than to the abodes of men. These may be named at the caprice of shifting occupants. Being constantly in the mouths of people, they are modified or murdered through ignorance, or an instinct

* *The Danes and Norwegians in England, Scotland, and Ireland*, p. 217.

to assimilate them to words with which the speakers are already familiar. Yet I cheerfully admit that I have known numerous cases in which the people in secluded districts have preserved the original and true pronunciation of an ancient name; and this has enabled me to trace it to its origin, when otherwise the clue to its etymology would have been irrecoverably lost. I always seek to know how the people dwelling near it pronounce the name of a place.

In dealing with this question we must take the generic part of the name, or that which indicates the feature common to the class of things to which the object named belongs. For every local name has really two parts or aspects—the part denoting what it has in common with others of its kind, and the part fixing, as it were, this common feature in the individual instance or case. Thus, *Drumalban* is the ridge of Alban, as *Drummelzier* is the ridge of Melzier or Meldred. *Drum* is of course the generic part of the word. And here it may be said that Philology and Psychology alike demonstrate that every generic name indicates a feature, usually a striking or characteristic feature, of the object, which is elevated to the rank of a generic idea. The varying idiosyncrasy or genius of a people is shown in the kind of feature which strikes it, which it selects, and which it names. Leibnitz, rich in all the regions of thought, was the first explicitly to point out this, the true genesis

of local names.* It affords the key to topographical nomenclature, and it is not less applicable in explanation of the general ideas or notions of our intelligence. It has been adopted and applied since the time of Leibnitz by Mr. Max Müller; though the theory of the latter, that the abstract idea of the root was first and independently named, is as untenable as his further doctrine, that this abstract quality is identical with the general idea which it grounds. The abstract quality indicated by the root is not a general idea; it is simply the attribute which by generalisation is transformed into the common characteristic of the class; and the general idea can as little be named by itself, as it can be thought by itself. The general and the individual instance or application of it are named together, as they are thought together in one indissoluble unity of conception.

The difficulty we meet with in dividing the Teutonic names between the Anglo-Saxon and the Scandinavian—embracing old Norse, Icelandic, Norwegian, and Danish—is that there are usually similar forms in both branches of the language. In many cases the Scandinavian root would yield the etymology as readily as the Anglo-Saxon. We know that some of the names were given by the Anglo-Saxons

* See Leibnitz, *Nouveaux Essais*,, l. iii., c. I., s. 3; c. II., III. Compare with these the rare work of Leibnitz, entitled *Collectanea Etymologica*, published posthumously by Eccard in 1717. Taking the views of Leibnitz as given in the *Nouveaux Essais* and in those collections, it is not too much to say that he laid down for the first time the principles of Comparative Philology.

in the historical period, and no doubt the presumption from history is, that where a word is found in its root-form, both in Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon, it was first applied by the latter people, as the earlier and more numerous immigrants into Britain. This is a liberal concession to the Anglo-Saxon element. But we shall find that there are a good many names in the valley of the Tweed and its tributaries, which have no corresponding Anglo-Saxon root, but are of purely Scandinavian origin. These we must attribute to settlers belonging to the northern Teutonic people. At what precise period these names were conferred, whether in the eighth and ninth centuries, or as late even as the eleventh, it is somewhat difficult to determine. Not unlikely the first period is the correct one, at least for the names of places. The Norsemen were very busy on all the northern seas, and up nearly all the rivers on the east coast of Scotland, during that dark period of Scottish history which extends from the eighth to the eleventh century. We are told that out of seven monarchs who reigned over the Scots from 863 to 961, three fell fighting against "the Danes,"* the name of terror on nearly every coast of Britain during those centuries. The invaders were, however, not as a rule successful on the east coast of Scotland. They established no kingdom in the Lowlands, although they certainly at a very early period got a permanent footing in Cumberland, and that even before a Danish dynasty

* Worsaæ, *The Danes in England*, p. 280.

secured for a time the throne of England. It was then probably they impressed their names on the places and hills along the watershed to the south of the valley of the Tweed. The Norseman owed his success in Britain partly to his own uncorrupted character and untouched individuality, and partly to the degeneracy, which by this time had come over the originally bold and venturesome, but too long successful, Anglo-Saxon people.

Looking first at the names of dwelling-places, we have very commonly in the Tweed and adjoining valleys the generic affix *ton*, *toun* or *town*. This, meaning an enclosure, or rather the area within the enclosure, is unquestionably the Anglo-Saxon *tun*. The specific names attached to it are, apart from other evidence, sufficient to establish this point. It still remains as applied more than a thousand years ago. Every farm nearly in the district is a *toun*. Then we have for a dwelling-place *wick* or *wyck*. The Anglo-Saxon form is *wic*, *wyc*. The same root is also found in the Scandinavian —Swedish and Icelandic—in the form of *wik* and *vik*, and generally signifies a haven or bay. The well-known *viking* is the bayer, or one who hides himself in the bay until he can pounce on the people of the land. The generic meaning of the root is no doubt dwelling or resting-place, and this may be, according to circumstances, a single dwelling-place, as a house or castle, a village or a bay. *Wic* in Anglo-Saxon also signifies soft yielding soil, quagmire, morass —translated *mariscus*, soft pasture land. And in this

meaning it appears in the names of places, as in Hlid-wic and Strad-wic.* Possibly some of the *wicks* by the Tweed were applied to spots with this feature in view. *Toun* or *tun* occurs much more frequently than *wic*. Yet we have Berwick, Hawick, Dawick or Dawyck. We have also under this head *ham*, *hame*, or *am*. This is without doubt a word applied directly by the Anglo-Saxons. The Moeso-Gothic form is *haim*, and the German *heim*, home or dwelling-place. *Ednam* is Eden-ham; *Oxnam* is Oxenham; *Middlem* is Middleham. The *hams* are as a rule near Northumbria, and are evidently an Angle importation. *Hăm* is simply what hems in. Professor Leo makes a distinction between this form and *hām*, a home, to which the Anglo-Saxons attached a peculiar sanctity.

Besides these appellations of dwelling-places, we have *stead*, from the Anglo-Saxon *stede*, and *stow*, each meaning a place, as in Kirkstead and in Stow. *Stoke* is the form of Stow in the north of England, and seems to point to an enclosure made by piles driven into the ground. Then there is *hall*, which is not uncommon by the Tweed, but more frequent throughout England. Its root is *heal*, a stone, and it originally meant either an enclosure by stones, or a house built by stones, as opposed to one of turf or wood. We have Hallyards and Hall-manor. *Cote* means mud cottage. We have it in Cauldcote and Hoscoat. *Yard* itself means girded round, and is applied generally to a bit

* Leo, *Anglo-Saxon Names*, p. 98.

of ground belonging to a house, rather than the dwelling itself. *Bury*, *borough*, *burgh*, *brough*, means a walled or sheltered place. The Anglo-Saxon root is *beorgan*, to hide, German *bergen*. *Bury* is the Anglo-Saxon form. *Burgh* and *brough* are Angle and Norse.* We have the former quite commonly along the Tweed, and we have *brough* in the vernacular pronunciation of Broughton.

Other Anglo-Saxon words connected with human dwellings are *fold*, that is, an enclosure made by felled trees; *croft*, enclosed cropped land; *haigh* or *hay*, originally *haga*, a small estate or field, and then an enclosure for the purposes of the chase, surrounded by a hedge. *Park* is enclosed field, adopted by the Saxons from the Cymric *parwg*.† *Head*, from the Anglo-Saxon *heafod*, is one of the most common suffixes.

"If," says Professer Leo, "we review the (Anglo-Saxon) words that bear reference to cultivation, we shall find this by far their most distinguishing characteristic, that every property was enclosed within certain boundaries. Not only are those the most frequent words in nomenclature, which convey this idea of enclosure and circumvallation, and such a one is *tun*, but the greater proportion of the words themselves signify the same thing. Besides *tún*, *ham*, *burh*, *hëarh*, *séta*, *wurth*, *haga*, *fyrhthe*, *snádas*, are of the same stamp. . . . An appreciation of the sacred nature of

* Compare Taylor, *Words and Places*, p. 130.

† Ibid., p. 129; Leo, *Anglo-Saxon Names*, p. 62.

personal property betrays itself throughout Anglo-Saxon cultivation; the whole race is imbued with the notion of the security and the sanctity of private right, and this is only in analogy with what we trace in other German tribes."* Some writers think that the Anglo-Saxons in Britain inherited the notion and practice of enclosure from their predecessors the Celts, on the ground that Britain shows the habit of enclosure far more than the Saxon parts of the continent. The nomadic character attributed to the Celts is rather against this view, though no doubt they had been subjected to the civilizing influence of Rome before the Saxons came, which would naturally impose more stationary habits. The description by Cæsar of the Cymric *town* of Cassivellaunus does not lead to the idea that it was meant as a place of permanent residence. "The Britons," he tells us, "call by the name of a *town* a place in the fastnesses of the woods, surrounded by a mound and trench, whither they are accustomed to betake themselves as a retreat from hostile incursion." "Oppidum autem Britanni vocant, quum sylvas impeditas vallo atque fossâ munierunt, quo incursionis hostium vitandæ causâ convenire consueverunt. Eo proficiscitur cum legionibus: locum reperit egregie natura atque opere munitum."† We know, however, from Ptolemy that the original inhabitants of Britain, at the time of the Roman

* Leo, *Anglo-Saxon Names*, pp. 70, 71.

† *De Bell. Gall.*, v., 21.

invasion, had several permanent towns or cities of very considerable size and importance.* The truth seems to be that each Anglo-Saxon naturally fenced for himself what he could rescue from the wild or forest, as a settlement and protection against the Cymri whom he had displaced. The Cymri had not, before the Saxon immigration, to contend with any foreign foe who sought to settle in the country. They were pastoral and nomadic, living without continual apprehensions of aggression from another race; their original notion of property was thus more that of the communal tribe than of the individual landholder.

For the names of streams we have *water*, *burn*, *syke*, *grain*. The first two are doubtless Anglo-Saxon appellatives —*wæter* and *burne*. The very wide distribution of these terms in the Lowlands of Scotland shows the largeness of the Anglo-Saxon immigration. The pronunciation *wæter* is quite common in the dales of the Esk and the Liddel. But *syke* is not so clearly Anglo-Saxon; and *grain* is not Anglo-Saxon at all. *Syke* is applied to a small stream or rill oozing through ground which it overspreads and moistens. It may be either from the Anglo-Saxon *sich*, a furrow, water-course, or from the Icelandic *sijk*. Probably the latter is the direct origin. It should here be noted that Icelandic is the nearest representative of the old Norse, or the most ancient existing form of the Scandinavian

* See Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, I., p. 70.

class of languages. In the twelfth century the Norse resolved itself into two branches, the Swedish and Danish. The Norwegian and Danish are very similar, almost identical. In the Fiords of Norway the spoken language is more akin to the Icelandic. Icelandic thus most closely represents the language of the old sea-kings.

Grain is applied in Tweeddale and in Liddesdale to the branches of a valley towards the head where it divides into several small glens, and hence to the branches of the stream, which usually flow through those hollows in the hills. It has no root in Anglo-Saxon, but is obviously derived from the ancient Norse *greni*, a branch, as of a tree. This is one clear instance at least of a purely distinctive Scandinavian appellative; and it is by no means of uncommon occurrence in the higher and wilder parts of the Tweeddale valleys, where we have most of the Norse names. It is said by Cleasby, *sub voce*, not to occur in German, Saxon, or English. He was evidently not aware of its use in the Lowlands of Scotland.

In connection with a stream we ought to add the term *ford*, which means a crossing, and also gives names to places near it, as Howford. *Ford* is purely Anglo-Saxon. The Dano-Norwegian form for ford is *wath*. It is not found in the valley of the Tweed, but it turns up near it in Carnwath. An artificial mill-stream is a *lade*, Anglo-Saxon *lad*.

For steep breaks or descents in the sides of banks or hills, generally adjacent to streams and formed by water-courses, we have *heugh*, *cleuch*, and *scaur*. *Heugh* or *heuch* is probably from the Anglo-Saxon *how*, a hill, though this root also is Danish, or the old High German *houc*, a mound. *How* we use for a hollow; but this implies height as well. We have the *how* of the hill. *Cleuch* or *cleugh*, a rugged ascent, or a hollow descent on the hillside, is the Anglo-Saxon *clough*, a cleft of a rock, or in the side of a hill.* *Cleughs* abound in Ettrick and Yarrow. *Scar* or *scaur* is defined "a bare place on the side of a steep hill, from which the sward has been washed down by rains." This is probably the Scandinavian *skaer*, a rock; there being no Anglo-Saxon equivalent.

For a plain we have *holm*, *haugh*, *lee*. Of these *lee* may be Anglo-Saxon, *leag*, *legh*, *ley*, a field. There is, however, an Icelandic root *hle*, *hlie*, meaning shelter or security. And we still speak of the lee-side of the hill, meaning the side protected from the storm. *Holm* may be either Anglo-Saxon or old Norse. *Holm* signifies commonly a bit of level low ground on the banks of a river. Originally it meant an island in a river or bay, hence meadow near the sea or a river. It is of frequent occurrence in proper names in Iceland. The application of *holm* to spots in the river valleys of the Lowlands of Scotland, seems to point to a time when the rivers were streams passing through

* See Jamieson and Bosworth, *sub voc.*

inland lakes, with green islets appearing in the midst of them. There is another word in use in Tweeddale which is somewhat similar to *holm*, viz., *whaum*. This is used to denote a small valley or hollow between hills, and as thus applied is pronounced *whaum*, and also *whum* or *whym*, as Cademuir Whaum, Hundleshope Whaum. Now this is a term borrowed directly from the Icelandic *hvammr*, and means a grassy slope or vale. Curiously enough these localities I have now mentioned have near them other names of undoubted Scandinavian origin. *Haugh* is from Icelandic *hagi*, place for pasture. There is a Norse root, *haugr*, a mound; but the former is the more likely origin of haugh on Tweedside, which means a stretch of plain by a river. *Myre*, too, a bog or swamp, is purely Norse. The root is *myrr*, and it is quite common in Iceland.

For names of hills we have very commonly *law*, *top*, *watch*, *edge*, *knowe*, *mount*, *kaim*, *bank*, *head*, *height*, *kipp*, *dod*. All these, with the doubtful exception of the two last, are clearly Anglo-Saxon. *Kipp* or *kip* is connected with *cap*, *caput*, κεφαλή. *Dod* is analogous to *dawd*, *lump*, and this is probably the old and almost obsolete Icelandic *toddi*, meaning a portion. It is a very common name for a rounded hill in the south and south-eastern Lowlands. It is also found in the Lake District. For a dip or hollow on the top of a hill, admitting a road or pathway, we have *sware* or *swire*, that is, the Anglo-Saxon *swær*, col, or

neck. *Swire* occurs in one of the sweetest lines of Gawain Douglas:—

"The sough of the swire and the soun of the streams."

On the Tweed we have Manor Sware or Swire. We have also the Reid Swire, memorable for its bloody conflict, more than five hundred years after the Angles had left the name high up on the watershed of the Cheviots.

For wood we have *shaw*, which is probably the Scandinavian *skogr*. We have an Anglo-Saxon root, *sceaga*. *Den*, or *dean*, is pretty frequent, and is from the Anglo-Saxon *denu*, a wooded hollow. *Field* occurs in Jedderfield, Hutchinfield, and means a forest clearing; the Anglo-Saxon is *feld*.

For a valley one of the most common names in the Tweed district, especially towards the upper part, is *hope*. There is no Anglo-Saxon word corresponding to this. In Icelandic *hop* is haven, *recessus maris*. We have an example of this application in St. Margaret's Hope on the coast of Fife. And no doubt the primary idea of it is shelter, as in a land-locked bay, or in the sloping hollow between two hills. In Celtic *hope* is a small valley between mountains. Whatever race brought *hope* into the Lowlands of Scotland —into the Tweed, the Yarrow and the Ettrick—it must have been a very numerous body. If of Scandinavian origin, as it seems to be, it points to a large and permanent element of this people in the district. It is one of the commonest and sweetest of our names. *Hof* in

Anglo-Saxon is a farm and the house upon it. And of course we have the German *hof*, but I doubt whether *hope* has anything but an indirect connection with either of those terms. Up in the hopes we find frequently *shiel* and *shieling*. These are from the old Norse *skali*, a shepherd's hut, or hut put up for a temporary purpose. It is now so used in Norway. The people who named the hopes put down the shielings.

Dale, too, must be set down to the account of the Scandinavian; and this is very important, for it covers all the great valleys—Tweeddale, Teviotdale, Eskdale, Liddesdale, Annandale, and Clydesdale. In England there are at least one hundred and forty-two dales, clearly attributable to the same language.*

We have thus seen that there is a considerable number of names which we must refer to the northern Teutonic or Scandinavian language, even among words of the most frequent occurrence. There is also, however, a very considerable number of appellations, which, though of less frequent use, are distinctively Scandinavian. These are, for hills, *fell* and *rig*, for ravine and burn, *gil* and *beck*, and for dwelling-place or toun, *by*, *bye*. Instances of these are found in the valley of the Tweed itself; for the river afforded an opening to the invaders from the sea in the eighth and ninth centuries. But the locality and distribution of the names rather show that the Scandinavians did not make

* See Worsaæ, *The Danes in England*, p. 71.

their main approach into the district by the river. They came apparently from their settlements in Cumberland and Dumfries upwards to the southern and south-eastern slopes of the uplands of the Tweed. Cymri or Saxon would be ready to defend the opening of the river. They were more exposed to invasion on the long ridges of the southern hills. There, too, the Scandinavian had a background and support in the Norwegian settlements on the shores of the Solway. Along the watershed of the Cheviots—between Roxburgh and Cumberland and the tributaries of the Teviot on the north, and those of the Esk and the Liddel on the south—we find very frequently the Scandinavian *rig* (*ryg*) and *fell* for hill. These, indeed, alternate pretty constantly with the Saxon *law*. And further north-westward, in the same line of country, we have, besides, the Scandinavian *beck* and *gil*. Capplegil, Bodsbeck, Drycleuch Rig, Black Rig, Hawkshaw Rig, show that the Scandinavians had found their way up the Moffat water to the southern hills, whence the streams flow to the Yarrow. Thence probably they had passed by the Douglas Burn over into the secluded valley of Glensax, which trends north-eastwards to the Tweed, for we find in it the Dunrig and Newby, or the new settlement, obviously planted by Scandinavian incomers. A tributary of the Glensax water bears the name of Waddenshope, undoubtedly Woden's Hope, Saxon possibly, hardly Scandinavian, for Odin was the northern form of the name of the god-inspirer of

warlike fury. What makes this derivation almost certain, is that, in 1262, in the dispute about the right to the possession of this glen, between an early Saxon settler, Robert Cruik of Cruikston, and the burgesses of Peebles, what is now Waddenshope was called *Waltam's Hope;* and we know that Woden and Waltam were synonymous terms.* This seems to indicate, what we might independently expect, that the Saxons had been located in the valley before the Scandinavians came and named their settlement *Newby*. Besides the *by* in this local designation, we have it in the distinctively Danish name *Baddeby*, which appears in the earliest charters as that of a proprietor of lands in the adjoining valley of the Manor. Right opposite the opening of Glensax, and on a hill-face on the north bank of the Tweed, are the marked remains of an ancient fort. The name of it, Janet's Brae, is supposed to be a corruption of Dane's Brae. Soonhope, the glen and stream which rounds the Dane's Brae, is Swinehope, a Scandinavian word, as we have Swinethorpe in Danish England. The foreigner had evidently struck down at this point from the southern hills on the valley of the Tweed, and here established himself with a hold of the places. The same people had passed up Evandale and Annandale, leaving their *dale* in each, for to the west and north-west of the sources of the Tweed we have Hartfell,

* See *Charters of the Burgh of Peebles, Scottish Burgh Records Society*, p. 4.

Fopperbeck, Badlieu Rig, Duncan Gill, Wind Gill, Snow Gill, and Ram Gill. These *gills* are the ravines through which small streams flow northwards to the pastoral vale of Upper Clydesdale.

But besides these local names, it appears that in the vernacular of the people of the Lowlands there is a large number of words of Scandinavian origin, Danish-Norwegian, or Danish purely. Indeed Mr. Worsaæ holds that "the popular language in the Lowlands contains a greater number of Scandinavian words and phrases than even the dialect of the north of England."* "The language of the North of England," says Sir G. W. Dasent, "and especially the dialect called Lowland Scotch, was full and to this day is full of words and expressions which can only be explained by help of the Icelandic as the representative of the old Northern language spoken by the Scandinavian settlers in England." † The terms given below we have in Tweeddale, the most of them in common with the people among the mountains of Yorkshire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire. Several of them are doubtless in use in other parts of Scotland. But the characteristic thing is that they are all without exception to be found now, or at least might have been so very recently, in the language spoken by the common people native to Tweeddale, and, therefore, not derived either from books or from other parts of the Lowlands.

* *The Danes in England*, p. 202.

† Introduction to Cleasby's *Icelandic-English Dictionary*, p. 49.

And what is conclusive of their native origin, these words are as a rule quite common in the old Border Ballads, which were transmitted by oral tradition, in many cases through numerous generations, down to the commencement of the present century, the date of the collection of the *Minstrelsy of the Border*. The truth in the matter seems to be that, while the Angle speech of Northumbria became the language of Scotland, it was largely intermixed with Scandinavian terms before it spread beyond the bounds of Northumbria itself; and thus the greater part of the Scandinavian words of common speech to be found in other parts of Scotland (except, of course, the Orkneys and Shetland) were carried along with the Angle from the ancient kingdom of Bernicia.

The great majority of the words here given are taken from Worsaæ's table.* I have, however, added several words which are not to be found in that table. These I have selected from the vernacular of Tweedside. I have also assigned to them their Scandinavian etymology. In some cases an Anglo-Saxon root might be supposed to yield the name, but, as a rule, the words here set down are nearest in spelling and in pronunciation to the Scandinavian form :—

Tweeddale.	*English.*	*Danish.*
Allars.	Alders.	Elletraer.
Awns.	Beads of corn.	Avner.
Bake-board.	Baking-board.	Back-bword.

* *The Danes in England*, pp. 85, 86.

Tweeddale.	*English.*	*Danish.*
Bairn.	Child.	Barn.
Bid.	To invite.	Byde, indbyde.
Bide.	To stay.	Bie.
Big, biggin.	To build, building.	Bygge, bygning.
Byre.	A cow-house.	Byr, same as by.
Blend.	To mix.	Blande.
Bord-claith.	Table-cloth.	Bordklæde.
Boll or bole.	Trunk of a tree.	Bul.
Bower or bour.	Bed-chamber.	Buur.
Clip.	To cut.	Clippe.
Cluve, cloof.	Hoof.	Klov, Hov.
Drucken.	Drunken.	Drukken.
Dyke, dike.	Ditch.*	Dige.
Elt.	To knead.	Ælte.
Flit.	To remove from one house to another.	Flitte.
Fra.	From.	Fra.
Frem folks.	Fremd, strangers.	Fremmede Folke.
Fou.	Drunk.	Fuld.
Gait, gate.	Road, street.	Gata.
Gar.	To make, cause.	Gjöre.
Gowk.	Cuckoo.	Gjöge.
Glowring.	Staring.	Gloende.
Greit, greets.	To weep, tears.	Grœde, Graad.
Greype, grape.	Dung-fork.	Möggreve.
Grise.	Young pig.	Grüs.
Groats.	Husked corn.	Grudtet korn.
Hald.	Hold.	Hald.
Hand clout.	Towel.	Haandklæde.
Handsel.	Earnest, gift.	Hansel.
Harns, harn-pan.	Brains, brain-pan.	Hjerne, hjerne-skal.
Heck.	Hay-rack.	Hække (til Hö).
Hesp.	Latch.	Haspe (Dör).
Hindberries.	Raspberries.	Hindbaer.
Hoose.	House.	Huus.
Hose.	Stocking.	Hose.
Kaam, kem.	Comb, to comb.	Kam, kæmme.
Kail, kale.	Cabbage.	Kaal.
Kern or kirn-milk.	Churn-milk.	Kjernemelk.
Kern, kirn.	To churn.	Kjerne.

* Now applied to a drystone wall, used in place of the old fence ditch.

Tweeddale.	*English.*	*Danish.*
Kilt.	To tuck up.	Kilte.
Kitling.	Kitten.	Killing.
Kirk-yard.	Church-yard.	Kirkgarth.
Loft.	Roof, upper room.	Loft.
Ling.*	Heath.	Ling.
Liester.	Barbed fish-spear.	Lyster.
Lowe.	Flame.	Lue.
Mind.	To remember.	Mindes.
Mirk, murk.	Dark.	Mörk.
Midden.	Dunghill.	Mödding.
Nab.	To catch.	Nappe.
Neaf or neif, neaf-full.	Fist, handful.	Næve, næveful̇d.
Neb.	Bill, beak, nose.	Næb.
Nipping.	To sip.	Nippe.
Nowth, nowt.	Neat cattle.	Nöd.
Pot-scar.	Potsherd.	Potteskar.
Quern.	Hand-mill.	Qværn.
Read, rede.	To guess, know fully.	Raade, udtyde.
Read, red.	To comb.	Rede (Haar).
Reastet.	Toasted.	Ristet.
Reik or reek.	Smoke.	Rög.
Rid.	To remove.	Rydde.
Rig, riggin.	Back, ridge of a house.	Ryg, Rygning.
Rip up.	To revive (injuries).	Rippe op.
Rive.	To split, divide.	Rive (splitte).
Rock.	Distaff.	Rok.
Rowan tree.	Mountain ash.	Ronnetræ.
Roun, rouner.	Spawn, salmon about to spawn.	Rogn.
Sackless.†	Without suit.	Sageslös.
Sark, serk.	Shirt.	Særk.
Schrike or skrike.	To shriek.	Skrige.
Shaw.	Wood.	Skov, Skogr.
Sele.	To bind, fasten.	Bind, sele.
Slae-thorn.	Sloe-thorn.	Slaatjörn.
Sleck, slock, slocken.	To put out, quench.	Slukke.
Smiddy.	Blacksmith's shop.	Smedie.
Smooth-hole.	Hiding place.	Smuthul.
Speer.	To ask.	Spörge.

* One kind of bell-heather.

† "Wherein that sackless knight was slain"—*Old Balldd.*

Tweeddale.	*English.*	*Danish.*
Stee or stey.	Ladder, steep.	Stige.
Stumpy.	Short, thick.	Stumpet.
Stot.	Young horse, bullock.	Stod.
Sype, sipe.	To drop gently, ooze.	Sive.
Thack.	Thatch.	Thack.
Theaker, thackker.	Thatcher.	Thackker.
Threaves, thraves.	Bundles of twenty or thirty sheaves.	Traver.
Toom.	Empty.	Tom.
Trows.*	Troughs.	Trow.
Unrid or unred.	Disorderly.	Uredt, urede.
Uphold.	To maintain.	Holde oppe.
Wan or wand.	Rod.	Vaand.
Wark, to mak a wark.	Ache, to complain.	Værk (smerte).
War and war.	Worse and worse.	Værre og værre.
Yard.	Garden.	Gaard.
Yen or yin.	One.	Een, also Dutch, een.

There is thus evidence of a larger Norse or Scandinavian population on the Tweed in the old times than has been generally supposed. At the same time it must be admitted that the names of places due to the northern Teutons are few as compared with those of the same origin in Cumberland and Dumfries. We have on Tweedside itself neither *beck, garth* (a large farm), nor *wald*, so common in counties to the south and south-west of it. *Kell*, a spring, Danish-Norwegian, survives in Dumfriesshire in Kellhead and Kells. But it is not found on Tweedside. The Danish *toft* (field), is found pretty frequently. But we have no trace of *thorpe* (a village), *thwaite* (an isolated piece of land), unless perhaps in Moorfoot, *with* (forest), *force*

* Boats for crossing a river held together by a cross-pole.

(waterfall) or *tarn*, as in the eastern, midland, and northern counties of England.

The facts that the most of the Scandinavian words now found in the valley of the Tweed belong to the ordinary vernacular speech of the people, and that the names of places attributable to the languages of the northern Teutons are much fewer than the Anglo-Saxon, seem to point to a late popular immigration, when the localities had already received fixed appellations. This may have taken place in the eleventh century, when the Danish dynasty in England was overthrown by the Norman William,* and when it was likely that the Dane, loving democracy and hating feudalism as much as the Anglo-Saxon, would coalesce with him and seek, as he did, an asylum in the north under the line of the kings sprung from the Saxon Margaret. At the same time it seems obvious from the Scandinavian names of places and natural features, that long before this period, probably in the ninth century, the Norwegians had spread northwards from Cumberland and Dumfries. They penetrated apparently by the vales of the Liddel and the Esk, to the watershed of the Cheviots and to the heights about the head of the Ettrick. They found their way up Annandale, and, diverging by the Moffat water to the east, they passed into the vale of the Yarrow and even the southern feeders of the Tweed. And following the course of the Evan upwards from the same dale, they

* Compare Worsaæ, *The Danes in England*, p. 205.

formed a thin line round the north-eastern watershed of the Tweed, and occupied the glens that slope northwards to Upper Clydesdale. They passed to some extent westwards in Dumfriesshire beyond the valley of the Esk and the Annan; but when we come to the Nith and the country beyond, we find ourself among a preponderating number of Gaelic names.

It might be somewhat hazardous to attempt a distribution of the Scandinavian names among the branches of that language. Worsaæ, however, is inclined to regard as Norwegian *dale, force, fell (fjall), tarn* (old Norwegian, *tjörn, tjarn)* and *haugh.* "Exactly similar names," he tells us, "are met with to this day in the mountains of Norway, whilst they are less common, or altogether wanting, in the flat country of Denmark."* In fact, as a rule, the Norwegians in immigrating preferred a mountainous country like their own. And this may account partly for their choice of Cumberland and the valleys of the Esk and the Liddel, and for the names they have left in the uplands of Tweeddale. This view is strengthened by the absence in those districts of *thwaite* and *thorpe*, properly Danish forms.

This Scandinavian population has certainly left its impress on the unwritten compositions of the north of England and the Lowlands of Scotland, and through these now on the literature of our time. The Saxon had neither, as has

* *The Danes in England*, pp. 72, 73.

been well said, "the pathos which inspires the bardic songs of the vanquished Cymri, the exulting imagination which reigns in the sagas of the north, nor the dramatic life which animates everywhere the legendary tales that light up the dim beginnings of a people's history." The Scandinavian genius, on the other hand, was essentially bardic. And it sung of action, of deeds of daring, and of battle. That intense ballad spirit, which loved and celebrated personal deeds, to the exclusion nearly of all else, through the middle period of Scottish history, and which was pre-eminently developed in the north of England, the Scandinavian area of settlement, and in the Lowlands of Scotland, seems to have been an outcome mainly of the Danish and Norwegian blood. The frame of the old ballad even, as well as its animating soul, was a legacy of the ardour, the life, and the idiosyncrasy of the northmen who left their descendants in our glens. And several of the refrains which have come down to us through the years, and from what we suppose are our Scottish ancestors, are really runes that were chanted long ago by the bards of the sea-lords from Scandinavia, when they sung of loyalty to hero and successful chief.*

The question arises:—Have we now any traces of the blood and appearance of those Scandinavians in the district, be they old Norse, Norwegian, or Danish? Let us hear what Mr. Worsaæ says of his experience in the north

* Compare Worsaæ, *The Danes in England*, p. 89.

of England, "In the midland, and especially in the northern part of England, I saw every moment, and particularly in the rural districts, faces exactly resembling those at home. Had I met the same persons in Denmark or Norway, it would never have entered my mind that they were foreigners. Now and then I also met with some whose taller growth and sharper features reminded me of the inhabitants of South Jutland or Sleswick, and particularly of Angeln; districts of Denmark which first sent colonists to England. It is not easy to describe peculiarities which can be appreciated in all their details only by the eye; nor dare I implicitly conclude that in the above named cases I have really met with persons descended in a direct line from the old Northmen. I adduce it only as a striking fact, which will not escape the attention of at least any observant Scandinavian traveller, that the inhabitants of the north of England bear, on the whole, more than those of any other part of that country, an unmistakeable personal resemblance to the Danes and Norwegians."* This is very interesting and instructive. It would have been still more so had the writer been able to extend his observations to the shepherds in the vales of the Teviot, the Ettrick, and the Yarrow, and in the uplands of the Tweed. I do not doubt but that after the long lapse of the centuries he would have found there a good many types of the class which he observed in the north of England. He thus sums up

* *The Danes in England*, pp. 79, 80.

the physical characteristics of the north of England people as distinguished from the lowlander of the south:—"The form of the face is broader, the cheek bones project a little, the nose is somewhat flatter and at times turned a little upwards, the eyes and hair are of a lighter colour, and even deep red hair is far from being uncommon. The people are not very tall in stature, but usually more compact and strongly built than their countrymen towards the south."* We know with certainty that the *Fin Gall* or *Finn Gennti*, the White Strangers or Norwegians, obtained a permanent settlement near the Tees and in York, under Eric of the Bloody Axe, son of Harald Harfagr. They were favoured by Athelstan that they might protect the coast against their own northern neighbours the *Dubh Gall* or *Dubh Gennti*, the Black Strangers or Danes.

Should Mr. Worsaæ return to Britain, and take a few days' excursion among the hills of Ettrick and Yarrow, I promise to find him as perfect a type of the fair or Norwegian blood as any he will meet with in the north of England. And as for surnames of persons, he will find constantly the pure Scandinavian *sön* or *sen*, in Anderson, Johnson, and many others, among "the braw lads" of Ettrick and Gala. Johnson, a bold, brave name in the Lowlands, is a true Norse name, the most common in Iceland, as it is one of the most common in the Lowlands of Scotland, and there associated with deeds of personal daring among the roughest

* *The Danes in England*, p. 79.

in Border History. In the beginning of this century there might have been seen any day on the braes of Yarrow, a shepherd lad with features, hair, and frame of body as like Worsaæ's description of the typical Scandinavian as could well be found. In him, too, there were thrilling ideals, and weird imaginings such as might have moved in the heart of any *Skald;* and he bore a name which might very fairly be regarded as indicating the Norwegian blood; for the Ettrick Shepherd was not named from the *hog* of the hill-side, but from the *haug* or *haig* of the old northern tongue, as the lairds of Bemerside carried it honourably through the long centuries of Scottish story.

But the examination of the local names of the district carries us far back beyond the period alike of Scandinavian and of Anglo-Saxon immigration. For we find a large number of Celtic local names and generic appellations. Of these some belong equally to different branches of the Celtic language. They are found, for example, in the Irish or Gaelic, and in the Cymric branches. But, apart from these, there is a large and highly distinctive class of British or Cymric words.

The names of the principal streams, of the higher and more remote hills, are not Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian; they are not Gaelic, they are Cymric or British. We find the same generic appellations as occur in Wales, in Cornwall, and Devonshire, and even across the channel

in Brittany. In broken and modified forms the same roots appear in the names of the principal rivers and mountains in large portions of Europe, particularly in Germany, Italy, Spain, and France. It is here we touch on the earliest race known to history who peopled the valley of the Tweed, that wave of population which at a remote period flowed from Asia over the greater part of Europe, preceding Slavonic and Teutonic alike.

It is somewhat difficult to classify those old names, and to assign each to its special branch of the Celtic. But we may yet make an approximation to this, and, in several cases, we have complete certainty as to the particular branch to which a root belongs. The two great divisions of the Celts are of course the Gaels and the Cymri. Whether they were thus divided before they came into Europe, or whether the bifurcation took place after this event, it is difficult to say. In Germany at least there seems evidence of the fact that the Gaels were there first, and that the Cymri followed them. There is some evidence for the supposition that the Gaels passed over into Britain from the valleys of the Rhine and the Moselle; while the Cymri appear to have come into the island from the remoter Alps. The language of the Gael is represented by that of Ireland and the Scoto-Gaelic of the Highlands of Scotland; that of the Cymri by the Armorican of Brittany, the Cornish, and the Welsh. The Cornish is extinct as a spoken language, Welsh is still living over a considerable area, and Armorican

is said to be the speech of a million and a half of Frenchmen.*

Of the Celtic root-words in the valley of the Tweed, we have, first of all, forms which are common to the Gaelic and Cymric branches of the language. These may, perhaps, be regarded as belonging to the old Celtic, before it was divided into two dialects, the Gaelic and Cymric. These are: *ard*, *glen*, *dal*† (a plain), *dun*, *loch* (Cymric *llwch*), *pol* (Irish *pol*, Arm. *poull*, Welsh *pwll*.)

Of these, however, *glen* may be fairly claimed as Cymric. The Armorican is *glen*, the Welsh is *glyn*, the Gaelic is *gleann*. *Pol*, too, is the direct Cornish form as well as Irish.

Of this class, the root-forms common to Gaelic and Cymric, *ard*, high, may be regarded as represented in the old word *ord*, or *orde*. The *Orde* appears in a document of about the year 1200, *Divise de Stobbo*, the marches between Stobo, Hopprewe, and Orde.‡ The Orde was the high-lying district towards the head of the Stobo Hopes. We have it still in Lochurd and Ladyurd. *Glen*, the Cymric form, abounds in the district. *Dun* or *don*, a hill-fort, very old Celtic, is common as a suffix, generally in the name of a hill, as in Caerdon, where we have an obvious duplication of roots of the same meaning. *Dun* is frequent in words on the continent of Europe. One is very striking:

* Compare Taylor, *Words and Places*, p. 203.

† *Dal* is, of course, also Norse.

‡ Printed in *Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis*, I., 89, No. 104.

Melun is Melodunum, and that is Mealldun, a hill-fort. We have the original form almost exactly in Meldon or Meall-dun, a hill by the Tweed, topped with curious old strongholds. We have also the Saxon *dun* applied to a hill, but obviously the adjective of colour, as in Dun Law. *Loch* is very common for an inland sheet of water, and is very near the Welsh form of the word *(llwch)*. *Pol*, a pool, appears in Polmood. *Mood* is probably *môd*, an enclosure or fold. *Pol* is also in Polternam and in Poltenstobbo, names which occur in the *Divise de Stobbo* already referred to. Polternam was the name of the little stream or burn which formed the march between Stobo and Hopprewe (Happrew) in the twelfth century. The other part of the word may be *ter*, clear, or *tern*, full of motion. *Pol* is usually softened into *pow* in the vernacular of the district.

There is, secondly, a class of root-forms which belong to the Gaelic alone. These are: *cul*, *drum*, *inch*, *kin*, *knock*, *ra*. But, as a rule, none of these forms occur more than once.

Of the purely Gaelic root-forms we have an example of *cul*, back or recess, in Culter or Cultir, the land at the back. *Drum*, ridge, appears in Drum Maw, and in Drummelzier. The oldest form of this name which appears in writing is Drumedler. Fordun gives Dunmeller, and *melr*, pl. *melar*, is old Norse for bent-grass. But this is probably merely an inaccuracy in spelling. *Inch*, islet, is found applied

to a small island in the centre of the Tweed near Barns. *Kin* may be in Kingeldores, but this is not certain. The oldest form is Kyngeldores, the later Kingildoris. *Knock*, hill or mound, is in Knock Knowes. *Ra* or *rha* is in Rachan. But the *ra* may be the Norse *ra, raa, wraa*, a corner, landmark, as in Wrae.

There is, thirdly, a class which belongs to the Cymric alone, either in its form of Welsh, or of Cornish and Armorican. This comprises: *alt*, a cliff or hill, *cairn* (a heap), *cefn* (back), *caer*, *cors*, *cwm*, *craig* (Welsh, a rock, Gaelic is *carraig*), *gar* (shank or leg), *lin*, *man* (a place or district), *pen*, *ros* (Cornish, Welsh *rhos*, a moor), *tre*, *trev*, pl. *trevow* (Cornish, a dwelling-place), *tar*, *tor*. We have thus a great number of root forms belonging to the Cymric alone, and it will be found that among these are the Celtic names of most frequent occurrence in the district. Of these forms there can be little doubt that *craig*, *dun*, *glen*, and *pol* were adopted from the original nomenclature of the district by the advancing Saxons, and incorporated into their language. *Dal* may be in some cases the Scandinavian *dale*. When Scandinavian, it usually appears as a suffix, as in Tweeddale, when Celtic as a prefix, as in Dalmarnock. Of the third class, the purely Cymric root-forms, *alt*, a cliff or hill, is found in Cramalt (Welsh *allt*), the bowed or bent cliff, an appellation exceedingly appropriate to the natural appearance. Altrive, in the valley of the Yarrow, may be referred to the same root.

Cefn, back, is in the Cheviots, as it is found in Chevington in Northumberland, and Chevin in Wharfdale. In France it is represented in Les Cevennes. "*Cefn*, dorsum, pars superior, dorsum montis, supersunt *les Cevennes* apud Gallos: Gebennici montes."* *Cairn* is very common, meaning a rock or a heap of stones. It is most usually applied in its Cymric sense (Carnedd) to a heap of stones, originally probably a *tumulus*, as opposed to its Gaelic sense of a rock simply. *Caer* is one of the most frequent names for a hill-fort, and hence for the hill itself, as Caerdon, the fort on the hill, Caersman, the place of the fort. It was once much more common than now. In a charter of James VI. of 1621, we have as names of places, now almost unknown, Carcads, Carlincraig, and Card, all apparently in one glen. And although *cathair*, pronounced *cair*, and the abbreviated form *car*, is found in Irish and Scoto-Gaelic, the form on Tweedside is distinctively the Cymric one *caer*. It was without doubt originally applied by the latter people to the numerous hill-forts in which they withstood Roman, Gael, Pict, and Saxon in turn. It is one of the most common generic appellations wherever we find a Cymric people. The Armorican is *cear* and *ker*,—the latter being the precise form of the family name common on Tweedside.

Cors, a bog or fen, common in Cornwall, appears in Corscleugh in the Yarrow, and probably also in Jeffrey's

* Leibnitz, *Collectanea Etymologica Celtica*, p. 103.

Corse, a hill beyond Bowbeat in the Moorfoot range. *Gar* occurs more than once, and means shank, also heron, probably from its long shank. It appears in Garlet and Garlavin, hills at the head of the Cymric Talla. *Lavin* is probably the Cornish *lawan*, birds. *Coomb* is not uncommon, probably from the root *cwm*, a cup-shaped depression in the hills, hence a shelter or place between hills, and thence probably applied to the hill itself. We have Coomlees in the original sense. White Coomb is on the borders of Peeblesshire and Dumfries, and Coomb Hill is in Tweedsmuir. *Cwm* is found in districts where the Cymric element is strong, and seems to have been adopted by the Anglo-Saxons, and changed by them into *coomb* or *combe*, as is common in the south of England. But Professor Leo of Halle maintains that the Saxon *combe* or *coomb* is due to a Saxon root, *cimban*, to join.* *Lin*, a pool, is common, as in *linn*, a waterfall, or pool at the foot of it. It is also in the Water of Lyne, and in Linton. *Lin* is the Cornish form of the root; Welsh, *llyn;* Gaelic, *linne*. *Man*, a place or district, appears in Caersman. This is the same word as in the Isle of Man, and in Slamannan. *Pen*, a head, hence a hill, is a true Cymric test-word. It occurs frequently in Tweeddale. It will fall to be noticed more particularly in connection with the hill-names of the district. *Ros*, a moor, Cornish, is to be distinguished from the Gaelic *ros*, a headland. The former appears probably

* *Nomenclature of the Anglo-Saxons*, p. 83.

in Melrose and Roslin.* It is very common in Cornwall.

Tor, a prominence or projecting rock, appears in Tortye, Torbank, Torwoodlee. It is very common in Derby, Devon, and Cornwall. The *tar* in Tarcriesh, parish of Stobo, is probably the same prefix. This form in Gaelic is *torr*. The suffix in Tortye, on the Tweed near Dawyck, is the Welsh *ty*, a town or settlement. Tortye is thus wholly Cymric.

Tre, *trev*, *treva*, *tra*, and *dre* are all forms of the same root, meaning a dwelling-place or home. These are Cymric, in fact mainly Cornish. The Irish form is *treabh*; the Gaelic is *treubh*. The root *tre* is said to occur ninety-six times in the names of villages in Cornwall, and more than twenty times in the same use in Wales. It is frequent in Brittany, in France, and in Spain.† It occurs in Trahenna, Traquair, Dreva, and in Trabroun and other places in the eastern counties. Dreva is simply the softened form of Treva, and is analogous to Trêves, Trieste, Trient. The same race who left their names in the plains of central Europe, and on the sunny shores of the Adriatic, pitched their dwellings on the green sloping hills of the Tweed; and all that is left of them there or nearer home is the symbolic word. Traquair, in a document of the year 1116 is Treverquyrd, and in one shortly after the year 1143 is Trauequair. Trauefquer is also found in the 1200. These are the oldest spellings of the name we know. Mr. Skene,

* Taylor, *Words and Places*, p. 237. † Ibid., p. 240.

than whom there is no higher authority on such a point, regards Traquair and Trabroun as derived from the Gaelic *treabher*, meaning "a naked side"—hence *traver*. The old form, Treverquyrd, rather supports this etymology. Trauequer and Trefquer seem to point, on the other hand, to the Cymric *trev* and *trewow*. There is at least no ground for supposing Trahenna or Dreva to be other than the simple and obvious Cymric forms. And if Traquair be Gaelic, it is certainly among the exceptions of the district.

To these we ought perhaps to add the Cymric *lan*, *llan*, an enclosure, hence a church. For, though this form is not found in the valley of the Tweed, it is found in Lanerch (Lanark), enclosure in the wood, and this was one of the principal towns in the Kingdom of Strathclyde, of which Tweeddale was the south-eastern portion. *Llan* is said to occur ninety-seven times in names of villages in Wales, and thirteen times in Cornwall. It is also very common in Brittany.* Mr. Skene tells us that *llan* and *tor* are both Gaelic and Cymric, and that these are, therefore, not proper test-words between the dialects. No doubt he is right in the first assertion, though *lann* in Gaelic is given by Williams as an old and obsolete form. But the very frequent and preponderating occurrence of these and other roots common to both dialects in Cymric districts, as opposed to Gaelic, points clearly to a certain continuity of race in the Cymri, since the words were first used by the

* Taylor, *Words and Places*, p. 241.

common Celtic stock. And this continuity during a long lapse of time is sufficient to give a distinctive character alike to a branch race and a branch language. The sub-division of a people which keeps and uses certain terms, which another sub-division abandons, wholly or in part, during the same period, makes for itself a distinctive dialect. We are thus entitled to regard a district in which these retained words are now found, though the Cymri may have disappeared from it, as once closer in race and language to the one sub-division, the Cymri, than to the other, the Gael. I think, also, that where there are two forms of the name of a place, one of which appears in Gaelic and another in the Cymric of the present day, we are entitled to regard an old local name which is the same with, or similar to the latter, as properly Cymric, having been given by the people whose language the Cymri have retained without material change. Those words in which consonants occur that are susceptible of certain uniform phonetic changes are no doubt the most certain tests, but they can hardly be regarded as the only ones.

If we look at the natural objects indicated by the Cymric names, we shall find among these the principal streams. Thus, Tweed is in Cymric Tywi, from the root *twy*, and probably means what limits, checks, or bounds. *Twyad* in Welsh is a hemming in.* Teviot is apparently from *Teifi*,

* Robertson gives the Gaelic *Tuath-aid*, "the river flowing to the north-side." The oldest spelling is in favour of the other derivation.

a name common in the early Cymric poems. It is retained in the "Teiit," the vernacular pronunciation. The root is *tyw*, spreading round, and *Teifi* is supposed to mean the spreading stream. Both *Tywi* and *Teifi* are frequent in the oldest Welsh and Strathclyde literature. Fruid is in Cymric *frwyd*, and means the impulsive stream. The root *frw*, or *frou*, impulse, occurs in a great many Welsh words, and is finely imitative of the sounding rush of water. Talla is from *tal*, that tops or fronts. *Tal Ard* occurs in the poems of Merlin; and Taliessin, the early Cymric bard of Strathclyde, was "the bright-browed." No one will doubt the appropriateness of the name of the stream who has seen the Talla gleam in its line of foam, amid the mists of Lochcraig Head and Moll's Cleuch Dod, downwards through its precipitous glen, and then pass swiftly amid the glacier moraines, a thousand feet below its source, to plunge headlong over its linns. It fronts the eye grandly by its high foaming flow, and not less grandly does it surround and possess the ear with its continuously falling sound. Lyne is from the root *lyn*, a pool, or slow-flowing body of water, and the term is specially descriptive of the Tweeddale Lyne.

Manor was originally spelt Maineure. This was in 1186. Then Menare and Menar occur in 1401, and 1555. It is always pronounced Mæner in the vernacular. The root is, no doubt, *mæn*, a stone, the same form as in Manchester. And as the stream

flows brightly along its rough channel, and makes an exquisite music amid its stones, every one must feel the appropriateness of the name. Mænawr is Welsh for a district comprehended in a stone boundary, hence manor. Mainnir in Gaelic is fold for cattle, or pen. Leithen is either from the root *laith*, that is run out, dank, or humid, or from *lli*, a flow, or stream. Quair, originally *quyrd* and *quer*, is probably from the Cornish root *quirt*, later form *gwer*, Welsh *gwyrdh*, green. The epithet is singularly appropriate, both to the valley of the stream and to the bordering hills. The eye of the modern poet catches the same feature which the old Cymri embodied in the name, and his fancy interprets it as symbolic of the freshness of primal human feeling—

"Frae mony a but and ben
They cam yin' hour to spen' on the greenwood sward:
But lang hae lad and lass been lying 'neath the grass,
The green green grass o' Traquair kirkyard.
They were blest beyond compare,
When they held their trystin' there,
Amang the greenest hills shone on by the sun,
And there they wan a rest,
The lownest and the best,
I' Traquair kirkyard when a' was done."

Gala is from *gâl*, what is uttered or spread out, an open plain. In Yarrow we have doubtless the root *garw*, what is rough rugged, a torrent. The oldest spelling is Gierua.* It is a rough and rapid stream, beautiful in its summer sheen,

* *Liber de Calchow*—Original Charter of Earl David (1119-1124).

resistless in its winter flow. But around that originally rude old word, what a wealth of tender and tragic associations has grown, and how sweetly and softly has it been for ages syllabled in song! Yair is no doubt from the same root, as are also Gareloch, Garve, and Garonne. "*Garw*, asper, rapidus. A rapiditate putat Camdenus dictam *Garumnam*."*

The fierce Rule Water, in Teviotdale, recalls at once the Cymric *rhu*, a forcible sending out, a roar, as *rhull*, its derivative, is, apt to break out, rash, hasty. It is not likely that Leyden had in his mind its root origin, but see how accurately his description fits it—

> "Between red ezlar banks that frightful scowl,
> Fring'd with grey hazel, roars the mining Roull."†

Bed, in Bedrule, is probably the old Cymric *bedw*, birch, the symbol of speed or readiness. The root *tam*, spreading, quiet, still, as in the Thames, appears in the Tema, which joins the Ettrick below Ettrick Kirk. Allan, or Aln, both in Roxburgh and Berwick, is said to be from the Gaelic *all*, white; hence *al-ian*, white avon or stream. ‡ It is quite as likely to come from the Welsh *al-wen*, very white or bright. The Allan Water, near Melrose, was popularly called the Elwand. There is a river Alwen in North Wales; and the word *gwen*, white, is a local name of the district, as in Gwenystrad, up the Gala Water. The Cornish and

* Leibnitz, *Collectanea, sub voce.* † *Scenes of Infancy*, Part I.
‡ Taylor, *Words and Places*, p. 225.

Armorican word for water, *dour*, is preserved in the Daer in Upper Clydesdale.

In other parts of the area of the Kingdom of Strathclyde, there are streams the names of which we must attribute either to a Cymric or Gaelic origin. These are Clyde, Annan, Esk, Eden, Tyne, Avon or Evan, Calder. Clyde is from the Gaelic *clith*, strong. Esk is probably from the Cymric *wysg*, a current; the Gaelic is *uisge*. Avon, or Evan, is from the Cymric *afon*, water, one of the most common root-forms of the class, and used both as a root-word and a proper name. In Calder the suffix is *dur*, water, Welsh *dwr*, of the same stock as *dour* in Daer.

Then the most of the higher and more remote hills bear distinctively British names. The line of hills that bars the Border land, the Cheviots, is, as we have seen, distinctively Cymric in designation. There is no better test-word of a Cymric origin than *pen*, a head, as applied to a hill. It abounds in Wales and Cornwall. The Gaelic form is *ben* or *beann*, also *kin*, *cenn*, or *ceann*. *Ben* is universal in the Gaelic district beyond the Forth. It does not occur in the Lowlands, except perhaps in Benjock, that is Benjoch, near Dawyck, in Benrig in Roxburgh, and in the reduplicated Mount Bengerlaw. With but one doubtful exception, the Cymric *pen* is not met with anywhere north of the Forth. Pendriech, the solitary *pen* there, is supposed to be a corruption of Pittendriech. But we have *pen* for hill pretty frequently in the valley of the Tweed, and we have evidence of the

root in names of places in other parts of the Kingdom of Strathclyde, as, for example, in the old town of Penrwnleth, on the Clyde at or below Bothwell, in the forest of Goddeu (Cadzow). The hills called *pens* in the south-eastern part of Strathclyde, that is, in the valley of the Tweed and its tributaries, are Ettrick Pen, Pendriech, Penvalla, Penvenna, Lee Pen, Penchrist Pen, Pennygant, Peniel Heugh. There are the Penton Linns and Penpont in Dumfriesshire.

Zeuss, the great Celtic philologist, has established as a test of the relative antiquity of the Cymric dialects, this principle, that the older forms of the language preferred the sharp consonants to the flat, as *p* to *b*, and *t* to *d*.* Now this test, as applied to the Cymric names of Tweeddale, show that these belong to the oldest forms of the language, and that, accordingly, they must have been given at a very remote or primitive period. The *p* of Pen, as opposed to Ben, is almost absolutely uniform. And, what is a very singular confirmation, the term mentioned as traditionally applied to Upper Tweeddale as early as the seventh century is the *Coet Celyddon*, or Wood of Caledon, whereas the later phrase would have been *Coed*, and not *Coet*.†

We have thus in the valley of the Tweed and its tributaries a decided preponderance of Cymric names and root-forms over Gaelic. We have the marked scarcity or

* Arnold, *Celtic Literature*, p. 74.

† See Nennius, *Historia Britonum*, p. 56.

absence of the distinctive Gaelic forms, such as *auchen, bal, bally, craigen, magh.* We have, further, no trace of the characteristically Pictish forms, *pit, auchter, for,* and *fin,* unless the last occurs in Fingland. Of the Gallowegian *bar,* the top or point, we have no indication; and *ar* and *arie,* a hill pasture, are awanting. The conclusion is unavoidable that the earliest dwellers by the Tweed, whose names have come down to us, belonged to the Cymric branch of the Celtic. Our analysis of the Cymric names even shows that these belonged to the Cornish branch of the language rather than the Welsh.

And, curiously enough, the information we obtain from Ptolemy and other historical sources, confirms the supposition that the original inhabitants of the valleys of the Tweed and the Clyde were identical with those of Cornwall. In the year 43 A.D., in the time of the Emperor Claudius, a line drawn across the island from the Severn to the Humber would have bounded the Roman Province on the north. In a northerly direction beyond this limit lay the Brigantes, a tribe of Britons thought by the Romans to be indigenous; while the tribes further south were regarded as immigrants from Belgic Gaul. The Brigantes stretched as far north as the Firth of Forth. Wales was occupied by the Silures and Ordovices. Beyond these, in what is now England, the Brigantes spread from the Eastern to the Western Sea, on the north-west they passed across the Solway and included Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, and Wigton.

In Dumfries they were called Selgovæ, or Elgovæ, and in the two latter counties Novantæ. On the east coast of the island, south of the Forth, in the counties of Northumberland, Berwick, part of Roxburgh, and Haddington, the Brigantes bore the name of the Otalini or Ottadeni. On the west and north of the Brigantes, and occupying all the country to the estuary of the Tay, were the Damnii or Damnonii. They stretched through Selkirk and Peebles up Tweeddale to Lanark, Renfrew, and Ayr. The Lowthers and the chain of hills which form the watershed between the streams flowing southwards to the Solway and those going northwards to the Firth of Clyde and the Western Sea, separated them from the Brigantes along the shores of the Solway. The Damnonii crossed the Forth and held Stirling, Dunbarton, Menteith, Stratherne, Fothreve or the western part of the peninsula of Fife. Their northern limit was the estuary of the Tay.

The Britons immediately west of the Ottadeni were called Gadeni. The Gadeni seem to have occupied the western part of Northumberland, a portion of Roxburghshire, Selkirk, and Peebles, and probably Linlithgow to the Forth. The evidence is strongly in favour of the supposition, that the Gadeni belonged to the Damnonii rather than to the Brigantes. It is with the Damnonii of Lanark, Renfrew, and Ayr that we find the Gadeni socially and politically incorporated, as soon as a union was formed to resist the Angles of Bernicia. If this be so, the probability is that

these Gadeni were of Cornish extraction, for the name of the general tribe, Dămnonii, is precisely that of the Britons who occupied Cornwall. This, taken in connection with the fact, now for the first time definitely ascertained, that the original nomenclature of the district is Cornish, points strongly to this general conclusion.

There is still another fact which bears pertinently in the same direction. We have a list of the kings of the Gwyddyl Ffichti, the Caledonians or Picts, whom Mr. Skene with great probability holds to be a Gaelic people. The names of the kings of the more northern Picts—those beyond The Mounth or the great range of mountains which stretch from Ben Nevis across the island to the Eastern Sea—are decidedly of a Gaelic character. The names of the kings of the southern Picts, or those who held the country south of The Mounth to the Firth of Forth, and even to some extent south of it, as in part of Linlithgow, have a British admixture, and this is not Welsh but Cornish.* These superadded forms seem thus to have been acquired through intercourse with this Cornish tribe of Damnonii.

There are several forms of words which are written on the face of the country as if in the way of palimpsest. This has arisen from the succession and mingling of various races of people. Culter Fell is obviously a compound of Celtic and Scandinavian. *Cultir* is the land at the back. *Fell* is, of course, Norwegian. Mossfennan was of old

* Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, I., C. IV., p. 211.

Mosspennoc, and as *pen* means head or hill, and *cnoc* very much the same, the addition of *cnoc* is by a newcomer. Gil's Burn is a mere reduplication of the same sort, unless *gil* be taken to mean simply ravine. Ven Law is obviously made up of a Saxon superscription upon a Cymric form, as, in ignorance of the meaning of the original word, the newcomer called it hill-hill. Besides adding *law* to *ven*, the Saxons first of all changed the *pen* into *ven*, in accordance with the general passing of sharp into softer consonants in German, as shown in Grimm's law; *p* and *ph* going into *f* and *v*. We have a similar duplication in Penhill and Penlaw in Dumfriesshire. In fact, this doubling of the name occurs every time the word water is added to Avon, Esk, or Dour.

In the twelfth century, when the Cymric people were being merged in the immigrant Angle and Anglo-Norman of England, and their names were being superseded, we have the old British form of word appearing for a moment, like a parting face, in the unfriendly charters of the period which transferred land and *nativi* to the new lords. Thus Penjacob, the original name of Edulf's town, now Eddlestone, or perhaps of the district which contained it, turns up in an early charter alongside the modern name.* The lordship passed to the great family of De Moreville, for some generations High Constables of Scotland. In a still earlier charter of the twelfth century, it appears as Gille-

* *Reg. Ep. Glasg.*, I., No. 173, between 1214-1249.

morestun, possibly enough a Saxon rendering of Moreville, with *gil*, ravine, prefixed. Richard de Moreville gave to Edulphus, the son of Utred, "Gillemorestun, que antiquitus vocabatur Peniacob." This was before 1189.*

As a rule, the Anglo-Saxon names are very realistic or matter-of-fact in their meaning, and they are not musical in sound. They are abrupt, and generally monosyllabic. We have Dun Law, Black Law, Whiteside Hill, Scawd Law, Onweather Hill, and Deid-for-Cauld Hill, and innumerable others of the same sort. These are all faithful to fact and superficial aspect, but they indicate no imaginative feeling about the objects named. Hawkshaw and Stanhope somewhat redeem the character of the Saxon names, and Windlestrae Law may pass for its literalness and suggestiveness of the brown and breezy bent.

The Cymri, who were first in the district, must have had a singularly fine musical sense; and, although we are not able always to trace the inner significance of their names of hill and stream and glen, they appear to have had a purer, deeper feeling for the nature around them, more communion with it, more sympathy with it, alike in its softer and in its sterner aspects, than their successors had, or than for long appeared in Saxon or English literature. Perhaps they were, as has been supposed from the evidence of the fragments of poetry which have come down to us, more sensi-

* *Reg. Epis. Glasg.*, I., 45.

tive, emotional, and quick in perception than the somewhat slow and patient waiter on fact, the Anglo-Saxon. Possibly also, as I venture to suggest, their dwellings, perched on the tops of the hills, away from the wooded and marshy low grounds, made them familiar with wide prospects and the ever-moving aspects of earth and sky, in storm and in sunshine. There are traces of this feeling in the Ossianic poems. Selma and Seláma are said to mean a place with a pleasant or wide prospect. "Darthula beheld thee from the top of her mossy tower: from the tower of Seláma, where her fathers dwelt." Gael and Cymri thus came to love the great hills, which to them were a dwelling, a refuge, and a defence. Stern nature was their daily companion and friend; might and mass of mountain their natural protection. Storm and mist came between them and Roman and Saxon foe. Even their burying-places were chosen on high spots. In death they wished to be laid where the spirit, as in life, would be gratified by the wide expanse of plain and hill, where it had felt the fullest consciousness of natural life, the perfect sense of what had been strongest in defence and grandest in the world around it. It was the same in the Lowlands of Scotland as in the windy headlands of the south of England. Molfra in Cornwall overlooks Mount's Bay; the cairn on Penmaenmaur and the strange weird stones of Kits Cotty House on the uplands of Kent, command extensive views of sea and land. This sympathy with the outlook into the infinity

of the earth and heavens was shared in, if not by the Saxon, at least by the romantic and impassioned Scandinavian. For where the hill above Broadford in Skye overlooks the sea, there the princess of the Norsemen, ere she died, besought and obtained a sublime resting-place; and beneath her in the summer sun gleams the sea, and in winter storm it chafes and roars. The hearts of these people came nearer to the soul of nature in its fulness and its power, than any experience of man for many hundreds of years, that followed their passing away from the earth. The Cymri had thus no name of fear for dark hill or stern glen. It was reserved for the dull Saxon, when he succeeded them, to speak of one of the grandest of our burns as the *Ugly (fearsome)* Grain. They gave us as names of hills and places most musical and loving words,—words which, if read even in the order of locality, run in something like rhythmic cadence, as—

> Garlavin, Caerdon, Cardrona, Caerlee,
> Penvenna, Penvalla, Trahenna, Traquair.

It was this musical sense, and the spirit that lay at the heart of it, which gave us in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries, in Wales and in the Kingdom of Strathclyde, the poems of Taliessin, "the bright-browed," of Aneurin, of Myrdin or Merlin, and of Llywarch Hen,—poems which embody a feeling for the nature around us, whether

gentle or grand, as loving, as free, and as pure as has been reached even in our nineteenth century literature, and characterised by what has been well called "the magic of nature," a charm quite peculiar to Celtic poetry.

II.

THE SEMI-HISTORIC PERIOD—ARTHUR AND THE ARTHURIAN LEGENDS.

In the summer of 78 A.D. Julius Agricola arrived in Britain. He found the northern boundary of the Roman Province advanced to the Solway on the north-west, and the Firth of Forth on the north-east. Next year, 79 A.D., Agricola added to the province the Selgovae of Dumfries and the Novantae of Kirkcudbright and Wigton, tribes of the Brigantes. In 80 A.D. he crossed the watershed of the Clyde, entered the country of the Damnonii, pressed northwards, and somewhere near the Tay fought the battle of "Mons Granpius." It was now the Romans first came into contact with the new nation of the Caledonii, the large-limbed and red-haired race, whom they defeated but never subdued. They had the primitive habits which Cæsar found among the indigenous Brigantes; they were great stainers of their bodies with woad—the cærulean woad—and they fought in chariots. The "Caledonii," or "Caledonii Britanni," occupied a line of country that stretched from Loch

Long to the Beauly Firth. We now meet with the local names of the "Caledonia Sylva," the "Caledonius Oceanus," and the "Promontorium Caledoniæ." This race Mr. Skene regards as Gaelic—as at first named Caledonii, then Caledonii and Meatae, then Ducaledones and Vecturiones, and, finally, the Picts famous in Scottish History. They were an insuperable barrier to the advance of the Roman Province to the north. At its best time, its only secure boundary was the northern wall of Lollius Urbicus or Antonine, between the Forth and the Clyde. Within the Walls of Hadrian and Antonine, the Romans were able to restrain the restless tribes of the northern Britons, and to consolidate them into a portion of the province of Valentia. Roman manners and culture seem to have made some way among the native tribes. There was intercourse with Rome, and there arose families claiming Roman descent. With the departure of the Romans from the north of the island, in 410, after an occupation of nearly four hundred years, the course of British history was changed. For some time after the date of this event, the Cymri of the Lowlands were not apparently united under one sovereign or head. They appear to have been divided into a series of independent principalities, ruled by *reguli*, or princelings, until Rydderch Hael, the prince of Lanark, gained the sovereignty of the district in 573, and constituted the kingdom of Strathclyde.

But before the time of Rydderch Hael, and the consoli-

dation of the Cymri into one kingdom that stretched from the Firth of Clyde to Carlisle and the Derwent, we have one or two most interesting and suggestive historical notices. These relate mainly to the work and exploits of the British Guledig, Arthur, and to the part which he played in Cymric history during the first half of the sixth century. The whole question as to the historic reality of Arthur, and his connection with the Cymri of the north, is, no doubt, involved in great difficulty. But a careful examination of the available authorities may perhaps lead us to some solid ground of fact, and to some new light on this period of our history. The first point is the question as to the documentary sources for statements about Arthur and his actions in this early part of the sixth century. There seem to be at least three distinct sources, which are quite capable of vindication as, to a great extent, the genuine record of facts. There is, first, the series of Bardic remains, contained in what are known as the *Four Ancient Books of Wales*; there is, secondly, the *Historia* of Gildas; and, thirdly, the *Historia Britonum* of Nennius. Mr. W. F. Skene, in his admirable edition of those remains, gives an account of them which may be summed up as follows: — The *Four Ancient Books of Wales* are from ancient MSS., viz.: *The Black Book of Caermarthen*, *The Book of Aneurin*, *The Book of Taliessin*, and *The Red Book of Hergest*. These MSS. lay in Welsh monasteries until the time of Henry VIII. They are partly

historic, partly mythological and prophetic. The poems contained in them are attributed, by tradition, by MS. title, or by rubric, to four bards—Myrdin (or Merlin), Aneurin, Taliessin, and Llywarch Hen. These bards are supposed to have lived in the sixth century. If this be so, they must have been contemporary with the British Arthur, who died in 537. At the same time, it is very probable that their remains, as we now find them, were not reduced to shape until within the first sixty years of the seventh century. *The Black Book of Caermarthen* was written in the time of Henry II. (1154-1189). *The Book of Aneurin* is a MS. of the latter part of the thirteenth century. *Taliessin* is a MS. of the beginning of the fourteenth century. *The Red Book of Hergest* appears to belong to the fourteenth or fifteenth century.*

There has been a question as to the authenticity of the Ossianic poems, on the ground of want of MSS., though I think the importance of this has been greatly exaggerated. But there can be no question that these Welsh poems were certainly reduced to writing many centuries ago. I cannot go into the question of the proof of the genuineness and authenticity of the poems. I think this has been fairly established, in regard at least to the greater number of them, especially the historical poems. But I may mention one thing which weighs greatly with me

* *The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, by William F. Skene, 1868, Introduction, C. I., II.

in their favour, and that is the circumstance that, though reduced to writing at a time when the romantic element had grown so completely around the British Arthur as to transfigure him into a mediæval Christian hero, there is no trace of this in these Welsh poems. On the contrary, he appears simply as the Guledig, as the deliverer of the northern Cymri from their Pictish and Anglian oppressors. He seems to be exactly that personage whom the exigencies of the time at which he is supposed to live would demand. Had Arthur been the creation of that twelfth century, he would certainly have been glorified as "the Flower of Chivalry and of Kings," and as that irrespectively altogether of epoch or locality.

Then there are the *Historia* and *Epistola* of Gildas. Gildas, born in 516, wrote his history, as we find, from independent sources, in 560, that is, forty-four years after what is regarded as the last victorious battle of Arthur, that of Badon Hill (*Caer Badon*), in 516, and only twenty-three years after Camelon, where Arthur fell. Gildas died in 570.

Then, thirdly, there is the *Historia Britonum* of Nennius. The *Historia Britonum* seems to be fairly regarded as a work of the seventh or eighth century. The original was in Welsh; it was then translated into Latin. It refers chiefly to Northumbria, and terminates with the foundation of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria by Ida, in 547. This *Historia Britonum* is obviously the

original work of Nennius, or of the writer whom he succeeded and continued. The *Genealogia* of the Saxon Kings was added in 738. In 838, Marc the Anchorite added the Life of Germanus and the Legend of St. Patrick. In 858 the whole bears the name of Nennius.*

The historic epoch of Arthur, if he be more than mythical, was doubtless the first half of the sixth century, and the notices of him in the works now referred to, point to him as living during that period. This was the critical period of the Cymric race in Britain, especially in Y Gogledd or the North. Picts, Scots, and Angles pressed upon the colony abandoned by Rome. Those tribes, at least the Picts and Angles, broke into the province from the north and east, and obtained a footing there. The Angles who assailed the province from the east are tolerably well know as to character and origin; for some time in Britain they had held the *Litus Saxonicum*, or Saxon shore. The Scots were of course the Gaels of Dalriada. The contraverted Picts came from the north of the northern wall, from the other side of what was known as the *Mare Frenessicum*, the Frisian Sea, afterwards named the Scots' Water, now the Firth of Forth. The Picts seem to have obtained a hold of a strip of country along the shore of the Firth of Forth, south of the wall. This extended southwards to the Pentlands (Pehtlands), and westwards as far probably as the Avon in Linlithgowshire. This district of the Picts

* See Skene, *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, Int., c. II.

was called Manau Gododin. From this they pressed onwards until they obtained some kind of settlement in the country to the east and south as far probably as the Tweed, and now divided into the counties of East Lothian, Berwick, and Roxburgh. This occupation, at least in a permanent form, does not seem to have taken place until the beginning of the sixth century. For we find that after Hengist arrived in Kent, in 449, he was followed by a body of Saxons, headed by his son Octa and his nephew Ebissa or Eossa, as the Welsh called him. According to Nennius, Vortigern, the weak and indulgent king of the southern Cymri, allowed Hengist to send for this body that they might fight against the Scots of Dalriada, who had apparently overrun the province beyond the northern wall. The two Saxon adventurers were to be rewarded with the districts in the north, near the wall which is called *Guaul.** This band, Nennius tells us, had forty ships *(ciuli)*. They sailed round the Picts, laid waste the Orkneys, and came and occupied several districts beyond the *Mare Frenessicum* up to the confines of the Picts.† If the *Mare Frenessicum* be, as is supposed, the Firth of Forth, the Picts are here represented as possessing the country to the north of it. Their real boundary at this time was,

* *Historia Britonum*, p. 38.

† *Historia Britonum*, p. 38. "Regiones plurimas ultra Mare Frenessicum usque ad confinium Pictorum," ed. Stevenson. The phrase "ultra Mare Frenessicum" occurs only in one MS., the Harleian, and is probably an unwarranted addition to the original text.

however, in all probability the Firth of Forth. It is clear at any rate from this that the Angles under Octa and Eossa got possession of the country of the Cymri, at least along the east coast and the shores of the Firth as far as the southern boundary of the Picts. Now the Welsh traditions are at one in regarding Octa and Eossa as the opponents with whom the British Arthur carried on his campaign in this region of the Northern Wall.* These traditions, taken in connection with the narrative of Nennius, go far to settle the question, both as to the probable historic date of Arthur and the locality of his campaign or famous Twelve Battles.

Thus harassed and left to their own resources, there was a revival of public spirit among the Cymri. Driven, apparently, beyond the Tweed, they were anxious to regain the part of the country between the two walls which had been wrested from them. It seems to have been customary among them, in emergencies, to appoint a head over all the clans of a province. It was likely, in this crisis of their fate, that they would nominate one common head over all the tribes. Ambrosius Aurelianus, a man of Roman descent, had been their common leader, their Guledig or Pendragon. Guledig is the equivalent of Aurelianus, and is from *gulad*, country. Now this character of Guledig is exactly that under which the British chief, Arthur, is described in the earliest existing documents regarding him. Nennius calls him Dux

* Skene, *Books of Wales*, 1., p. 52.

Bellorum. He is described, too, as coming into notice immediately after the Guledig Ambrosius, as, in fact, taking up his function. Taliessin, in *The Chair of the Sovereign*, thus sings:—

> "From the loricated Legion
> Arose the Guledig,
> Around the old renowned boundary."*

For the details of Arthur's doings during this period, however slightly sketched, we are indebted to Nennius. He tells us that Arthur, the *Dux Bellorum* succeeding Ambrosius, fought twelve battles, the result of which was the freedom of the northern Cymri from their oppressors, for his lifetime at least thereafter, twenty-one years. "At that time," says Nennius, referring to the period after the arrival of Hengist, "the Saxons grew strong in numbers, and throve in Britain. Hengist, however, being dead, Octha, his son, passed over from the western part of Britain to the Kingdom of the Cantii (Kent), and from him are sprung the kings of the Cantii. Then Arthur fought against them in those days with the kings of the Brittones, but he himself was leader of the fights *(dux bellorum)*. The first battle was in the mouth of the river which is called Glein. The second, and third, and fourth, and fifth were on another river which is called Dubglas, and is in the region of Lennox (Linnuis). The sixth battle was on the river that is called Bassas. The

* Skene, *Books of Wales*, I., p. 261.

seventh was in the Wood of Caledon *(in silva Caledonis)*, that is, Cat Coit Celidon. The eighth was a battle in the fort (*Castello*) Guinnion, in which Arthur bore upon his shoulders* the image of Saint Mary, perpetual Virgin, and the Pagans were put to flight on that day, and there was a great slaughter of them through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of Saint Mary, his virgin mother. The ninth battle was fought in the city of Legion *(in urbe Legionis)*. He fought the tenth on the shore of the river which is called Tribruit. The eleventh took place on the hill which is called Agned. The twelfth was the battle on the hill of Badon *(in monte Badonis)*, in which there fell to the ground in one day nine hundred and sixty men in one onset of Arthur, and no one overthrew them but himself alone, and in all the battles he stood forth victorious. And they, while they were defeated in all the battles, sought assistance from Germany, and were augmented manifold without ceasing, and they brought over Kings from Germany, that these might reign over them in Britain, up to the time when Ida reigned, who was the son of Eobba. He himself was the first King in Beornicia, that is, in Berneich."† Ida, we know, began to reign in 547.

Now the sites of these battles have been long a matter of controversy. Were they fought against the

* Shoulder is probably a mistranslation of the original Welsh, which is *shield.*

† *Historia Britonum, Auctore Nennio*, s. 56.

Saxons of the south, or against the Angles and Picts of the north?

It is clear, I think, that in deciding such a question as this, we must have regard not only to the similarity of modern names with the historical sites of the battles as given by Nennius, but, as the battles were fought in succession and in one region, also to the natural succession or local connection of places. These twelve battles represent a campaign, not a series of isolated struggles, and that district, which can show the names in the order in which the campaign was likely to be carried out, has all the probability in its favour.

No theory yet advanced of those localities can stand this crucial test, except that first substantially propounded by a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1842, and since adopted, elaborated, and confirmed by the learning and sagacity of Mr. W. F. Skene. The theory is that these localities are in the kingdom of the northern Cymri, now the Lowlands of Scotland, and that the struggles at the various places were with Picts or Angles, or with both combined.

The first of these battles is said by Nennius to be fought "in ostium fluminis quod dicitur Glein." Mr. Skene thinks this Glen the river which rises in the hills that separate Ayr and Lanarkshire, and falls into the Irvine in the parish of Loudoun. Arthur was likely to march by the west, as Bernicia was held by the Angles; and he would natur-

ally avoid meeting the enemy in their greatest strength, until he had been able to attach to himself his own kindred as allies, and thus have some basis of operations. Then the second, third, fourth, and fifth battles, said to have been fought, "super aliud flumen quod dicitur Dubglas (Douglas), et est in regione Linnuis (Lennox)," are referred by Mr. Skene to the two streams of the name of Douglas that flow into Loch Lomond. We know that *Ben Arthur*, at the head of Loch Long, overlooks this very district between the two rivers.

The sixth battle was "super flumen quod vocatur Bassas." *Bass* means a mound formed near a river, as if artificial, but really natural. This affix Mr. Skene thinks is indicated in *Dunipais*, where there are two such mounds, near the Carron, where the river Bonny joins it.

Of special interest to us at present is the reference of Nennius to this seventh battle. It was fought, he tells us, "in the Wood of Caledon," "in Silva Caledonis;" it is spoken of as the "Cat Coit Celidon," "the battle in the Wood of Caledon." This is the one battle of which Mr. Skene has not attempted to fix the precise site. But there are some data which, without absolutely determining the point, may, I think, help us to a probable conclusion. Arthur's previous, or sixth battle, was on the Carron. Immediately thereafter he is found fighting a battle in the Wood of Caledon, the very centre of the oppressed Cymric population. Names and circumstances alike point to the

south of Scotland and to Upper Tweeddale as the scene of this battle. The *Silva Caledonis*, and even the *Caledonii Britanni* of the Romans, in the first century, referred vaguely to a district and to tribes north of the Brigantes. The most northerly boundary of the Brigantes was the Firth of Forth. They occupied towards the west the lands along the shore of the Solway, including Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, and Wigtown. But here they were bounded on the north by the wild range of mountainous country which runs, with little break, from the head of the Ettrick, and by the sources of the Yarrow, the Tweed, and the Clyde, and along the southern boundary of Ayr, well on to the western sea. It was only in his third campaign, in A.D. 80, that Julius Agricola penetrated through this mountain barrier into the Silva Caledonis, and encountered the new nations of the Damnonii and others lying still farther north. And now, for the first time, these warlike tribes became distinctly known to the Romans. The phrase *Silva Caledonis*, or Caledonian Forest, has come popularly to be restricted to a district north of the Forth. But there is no historical warrant for this limitation. The wood of Caledon, the *Nemus Caledonis* of Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the eleventh century, included Upper Tweeddale; and Fordun, still later, uses it in exactly the same application. What was afterwards known as the Forest, or Ettrick Forrest, was no doubt originally within the limits of the Wood of Caledon, as was also the Forest of Godeu or Cadzow. And

Falkirk is spoken of as in the Forest, in the thirteenth century.

From the scene of the sixth battle on the Carron, Arthur turned his march southwards to the wood of Caledon. His aim was to strike a blow at the Angles of Bernicia, and, avoiding the great stronghold of *Mynyd Agned* (Edinburgh), now held by them or their allies the Picts, he proceeded by the valley of the Tweed to reach their eastern boundary, which touched the river near Galashiels, and ran northwards, very much in the line of the vale of the Gala. An old Roman road led him from the Carron to the opening of the Biggar water, and thence he could pass readily through the district of the Cymri, for whom he was fighting, downwards to the Tweed. But here, in his way to the boundary of the Angles, he had to fight a battle. They had pressed westwards on the Cymri, and had obtained a footing in the district of the Gadeni. We have tracings of him on this march, though these are now almost forgotten. Just two miles below the traditional grave of Merlin, on the haugh of the Tweed, and exactly in the line of an ancient road that led from the Biggar valley down which I suppose that Arthur came, stood, until the beginning of this century, an almost perfect *cromlech*. It consisted of two or more upright stones, and one flat stone laid across as a roof, all of remarkable size; and just above it is the height of the Lour, a green conical hill, crowned with the remains of a very formidable prehistoric fort. That cromlech was universally known in the

district up to a recent period as *Arthur's Oven.* It was, unfortunately, destroyed at the beginning of this century, along with the old peel-tower near it of Easter Dawyck, the tower of Posso, and the ancient kirk of St. Gordian, that took us back to Roman times. The factor on the estate was no less a personage than the father of Sir, Walter Scott—who (the father, not the son) was apparently "a hater of old stones," and preferred immensely to see them utilised in dykes and cow-byres to finding them standing as symbols of antiquated historic memories.

This hill-fort of the Lour, of great size and strength, might possibly have been the scene of the seventh battle. But there is another locality near at hand, in favour of which there is greater probability. That is the hill of Cademuir, on the opposite side of the valley of the Manor, a tributary of the Tweed. This hill is protected on the north by these two streams. To the south it was then guarded by a loch. Its southern sides are steep, sharp, and stony: it is just such a position as would be chosen by defenders for a crucial fight. Moreover, it now bears the name of Cademuir, which, originally *Cad-more,* means *the great battle.* The root of the word is Cymric, *cad* being Welsh for battle; while the Gaelic form is *cath.* And amid the ruined walls, the green mounds, and the shapeless raths on its summit, there arise, in a hollow round the hardest to take of the old forts, a series of weird, upright, pit-fast stones, with nothing on them but the grey

scaurs of the years, yet silently telling us, in all likelihood, of the stricken dead below. In the valley at its foot is one of the largest of the single standing-stones of Tweeddale. The Cottonian and Harleian MSS. of Fordun say that the seventh battle of Arthur was "super Lincolum in silva Celidonis, quæ Britannice vocatur Caetcoit Celedon." * Lincoln never could be regarded as in the Wood of Caledon. But the Lyne in Tweeddale might be, and was in fact so regarded as late as the thirteenth century. The Romans had left a very strong station on the Lyne, in Arthur's time, and this might possibly be occupied by the Angles. The Water of Lyne itself joins the Tweed very near the north side of Cadmore. The battle probably swayed between these two points. The strong camp on the Lyne might have been first carried, and then the hill-forts of Cadmore. The natural and artificial difficulties of the position may well have led to a great and disastrous battle.

But this is not all. This site of the eighth battle, about the best ascertained of all, completely corresponds with the probable march of Arthur from Cadmore. It was in Castle Guinnion, "in Castello Guinnion," *i.e.*, the *white* fort or camp, situated in the *Gwenystrad* or *White Strath*, but by the Saxons, from the disaster they met with there, called *Wedale*, or *Dale of Woe*. This district, lying between the waters of the Heriot and the Lugate, tribu-

* *Chronica Gentis Scotarum*, I., l. 3, p. 3, ed. 1871.

taries of the Gala, is barely a day's march from Cadmore, and to reach it Arthur had only to follow the ancient road across the Caersman, up Glentress, and by the Dewar Water, past what is now known as the Piper's Grave. With all these considerations in view, we are not, I venture to think, far from the site of this seventh Arthurian battle when on the *Cadmore*.

With regard to the remaining battles mentioned by Nennius, Mr. Skene's view is that, having been victorious in those open field engagements against the enemy, Arthur next attacked their fortresses in turn. The ninth battle was fought "in urbe Leogis," or "Legionis." This has been with probability identified as Dunbarton, or Alclyde, known in a later record of David II. (1367), as "Castrum Arthuri." The tenth battle is regarded as having taken place at Stirling, and the eleventh, said to have been "in monte qui dicitur Agned," as at *Mynyd Agned* (Painted Mount), or Edinburgh. This latter battle was fought against the *Cathbregyon*, not Saxons, but Picts, who held the region of *Manau Gododin*. The twelfth battle was the "*obsessio montis Badonici*," or "in monte Badonis." The date of this was 516. Dr. Guest has shown the utter untenableness of the theory that the *Mons Badonis* was Bath. The probability is in favour of Bouden Hill, not far from Linlithgow.

This was the crowning victory of the Arthurian campaign, and, according to the *Bruts*, Arthur gave the district which he thus recovered from the Saxons to three brothers

—Urien, Llew, and Arawn. Urien got *Reged*, or *Mureif*, a district beyond the Wall of Antonine. Llew got *Lodoneis* or *Lothian*. As this was partly held by the Picts, Llew, or Lothus, was regarded as King of the Picts. His daughter, Theneu, was the mother, by supposed immaculate conception, of Kentigern, or St. Mungo, the great missionary apostle of Christianity in the wilds of Tweeddale and throughout the kingdom of Rydderch Hael, who subsequently ruled Llanerch, now Lanark, and Glasgow, with the adjacent districts. To Arawn, Arthur gave *Yscotlont* or *Prydyn*, the most northern part of the conquered district, as far as Stirling.*

We know nothing of Arthur for twenty-one years after this last great battle of Badon Hill. But meanwhile there is evidence of a growing insubordination to Arthur's rule, and a tendency to desertion from Christianity, of which Arthur is always represented as the champion. The Picts, Angles, and Scots had fused in both tendencies, and the result was a combination, under Modred, against the Cymric supremacy, which ended in the battle of Camlan or Camelon, possibly on the Carron, where the two opposing leaders fell, in 537. The Chronicle of 977 tells us that in 537 there was a "Gweith Camlan in qua Arthur et Medraut coruere," *i.e.*, there was the battle of Camlan, in which both Arthur and Medraut (or Modred) perished.† Modred was

* See Skene, *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, I., p. 58, *et seq.*

† Quoted by Skene, *Books of Wales*, I., p. 59.

the son of Llew, or Lothus, to whom Arthur gave Lothian. The dark shadow of Arthur's life arose from the supposition, embodied in the later romances, that Modred was not his nephew, but his son, by his own sister, the wife of Lothus. As Arthur, the father, fell by Modred's hand, we have a complete cycle of dramatic retribution.

Historically, the simple and natural passing away of the great British Guledig was, no doubt, his death at Camelon, striving against his nephew Modred, the head of a mixed Pagan party—Angle, Pict, and infidel Cymri—to keep entire the re-conquest of twenty-one years before. But very soon the historical Arthur began to pass into the mythical. Even in the days of the Welsh bards, his place of burial, like that of Moses of old, was wrapt in mystery. "A mystery to the world," says the old bard, "is the grave of Arthur." The baffled aspirations of the Cymric people, amid their later misfortunes, came to represent him as still living in an invisible sphere, one of the spirits of that world around them in which they profoundly believed. He was not dead; he had been merely transported to a mysterious home, again to return and lead the Cymri to victory and unity of kingdom. They knew even the place of his abode: he and his companions in battle reposed in the dreamy halls of the triple Eildons by the Tweed, waiting, in their armour sheen, the brave bugle call which should restore them to earthly life, and quicken the withered hand anew to grasp the sword. But how stout a heart is

needed to break the wizard spell which there holds Arthur and his knights!

> "Woe to the coward that ever he was born,
> Who did not draw the sword before he blew the horn."

For in that case he would be driven ignominiously back from the Eildon halls, amid the more than mortal rage of the guardian spirits of the place:—

> "Say who is he, with summons strong and high,
> Shall bid the charmëd sleep of ages fly;
> Roll the long sound through Eildon's caverns vast,
> While each dark warrior kindles at the blast;
> The horn, the falchion grasp with mighty hand,
> And peal proud Arthur's march from Fairyland." *

What does this myth teach us but that the bold heart of action is the true soul of speech? The traditional belief has not been groundless, and Leyden's question is not without its answer. If Arthur has not risen in the body, he has come in the spirit. In the *Idylls of the King* and in the *Holy Grail*, Arthur and his knights have awoke in our day to life and power at the trumpet-call of a great master of British song.

What I have now sketched is, I believe, the historical position of the original Arthur. It seems clear that, besides contending with Cerdic and the Saxons of Wessex, he fought

* Leyden, *Scenes of Infancy*, Part II.

on the plains of what are now the Lowlands of Scotland, leaving various unmistakeable memorials of his actions, work, and life. As a general confirmation of this, it may be added that there is no portion of Great Britain so full, in the same space, of Arthurian names as that part of Scotland which stretches from the brown slopes of the Grampians to the blue line of the Cheviots. Mr. Stuart Glennie has noted in it 139 places named from Arthur or his associates, or connected with his story by tradition and legend.* And there are several more to be added to Mr. Glennie's list. But the strength of the argument from the existence of these names does not, as appears to me, rest wholly on their number; it rests chiefly even on the fact that all other memory of Arthur and his associates, except what lies in those names and traditions, has died out of the Lowlands of Scotland ages ago. Other events and personages of Scottish history have come in to fill their places and to occupy the popular mind. We have, moreover, no popular songs or ballads commemorating the Arthurian exploits, from which, in the period of Scottish history proper, these Arthurian names might have been borrowed, and this for the reason that a new race, with a new language, had come to occupy the country. We are thus led to the conclusion that these designations have come down to us from a time and people that are almost pre-historic. If this be so, an entirely new and fresh

* *Arthurian Localities*, p. 125.

interest is thrown over the vales of the Clyde and the Tweed, indeed over the Lowlands of Scotland, for these haughs and hills were once the scene of struggles as patriotic, as heroic, as memorable, as those of the Scottish War of Independence, long before the present kingdom of Scotland had a being or a name. The ancient Briton in his wild beast skin, and eyeing his foe from his fort and wattled rath on the windy hill, loved the wooded land so well that he fought for it with a sublime tenacity—a tenacity as remarkable as that which his Saxon successor has shown under Bruce and the Stewarts down to our own times.

This view is further confirmed by a study of the old Welsh poems. The authors of these poems seem to have been intimately connected with the Cymric Kingdom of Strathclyde and the North. Taliessin, "the bright-browed," was bard of Urien and Owen, British princes of Reged, after the time of Arthur. Llywarch Hen was the son of Elidir, chief of Argoed. Reged and Argoed were divisions of Strathclyde. Aneurin was a native of Alclyde, now Dunbarton. And Merlin was, as we shall see, closely connected with Tweeddale. These early poems themselves contain numerous references to persons, to localities, and to incidents. In the main they are corroborated by the Latin historians. Arthur is there as Guledig. He is spoken of gratefully as "Arthur the blessed." He is represented as guarding the wall,

the southern defence of the Cymri, against Pict and Angle—

> "His assault over the wall,
> And his appropriate chair
> Amongst the retinue of the wall."*

The most of the knights or companions whose names hundreds of years afterwards were spread over Europe in the mediæval romances, Anglo-Norman, French, and Latin, are to be found there. They are fighting in the north of the Cymric kingdom, in what are now the Lowlands of Scotland, to recover the territory of their kindred Cymri from overriding Pict and Anglo-Saxon. Many of the places mentioned in the poems and historians can be traced in the names now existing; the legends and traditions connected with several of them are such as might be the germs of the mediæval romances. Kay and Bedivere are there—

> "Arthur and the fair Cai."

> "And rejoiced
> Cai as long as he hewed down."

> "In Mynyd Eiddyn (*i.e.*, now Edinburgh)
> He contended with Cynvyn;
> By the hundred there they fell,
> There they fell by the hundred,
> Before the accomplished Bedwyr."

* *The Chair of the Sovereign*, Book of Taliessin, xv., Skene, *Books of Wales*, I., p. 259.

We have

"Mabon the son of Mydron,
The servant of Uther Pendragon."

"Did not Manawyd bring
Perforated shields from Trywruid (*i.e.*, the Forth)?"

"And Mabon, the son of Mellt,
Spotted the pass with blood." *

There is Geraint—

"Under the thigh of Geraint were swift racers,
Long-legged, with the span of the stag,
With a nose like that of a consuming fire on a wild mountain."†

The reference here is to the sweeping power of the muir-burn in spring. There is Llew or Lothus, there is the traitorous Modred, there is Merlinus Sylvestris or Merlinus Caledonius, and his syster Gwendydd or Ganieda (the Dawn), and Chwifleian or Vivian his lady-love and conqueror. There is, finally, the Eildons, near the border of the Cymric kingdom, where the hope of the Cymri slept in the forms of Arthur and his quiescent yet immortal knights.

If this position be regarded as substantiated, or even if the proof be held as simply showing that the earliest mythical representations of Arthur had a foundation of fact in what is now called the south of Scotland, there clearly opens up to us an entirely new line of interest in

* *Black Book of Caermarthen*, XXI., Skene, I., p. 262.

† *Book of Caermarthen*, XXII., Skene, I., p. 268.

connection with the Lowlands of our country. This district thus connects us with the greatest theme of mediæval imagination and modern romance. For there is no single name in European literature, since the fall of the Roman empire down to our own time, with which are associated more poetic feeling and imaginings than that of Arthur, the British chief; there is none which has more frequently quickened ideal thought and longings in the finest minds in the long line of English and Continental poets and romancers.

From the sixth to the twelfth century, the cycle of the Arthurian legends was gradually formed, by successive contributions from various sources, and by the fusion of old and new feelings, beliefs, and manners. On the opposite continent, in Armorica (*ar*, on or near; *mor*, the sea), which originally comprehended the district between the Seine on the north and the Loire on the south, but in the middle ages was limited to Bretagne (Brittany), the name of Arthur was regarded with a peculiar fondness and reverence. Originally probably the Cymric tribes of that region and of Great Britain were one. The Armorican dialect had become somewhat different from that of Cornwall and Wales, still the Armorican and Cornish were more closely connected than the Welsh and Cornish; and doubtless there remained the old feeling of kinship and brotherhood. This was greatly intensified by the circumstance that the Britons of our land sought and found in successive generations, both before and after

the fatal year of 685, when the Saxon supremacy became undoubted, a refuge among their kinsmen in the Isle of Brittany. They carried with them the memories of their fatherland, and deepest among these was the image, real or mythic, or both, of the great British champion, Arthur, the *Guledig* of the race, the *Dux Bellorum* of the Cymri. For hundreds of years in Bretagne, the name and fame of Arthur resounded in the popular songs of the country. They were harped in the halls of the nobles by their native minstrels. They were listened to with delight by the Merovingian Kings at the court of the rising monarchy of France; where the notes of the "Chrotta Britanna" were heard alongside the harp of the barbarian and the Greek Achilliac—

"Plaudat tibi barbarus harpa,
Græcus Achilliaca; chrotta Britanna canat."*

The "fabulosi Britones" had already established their repute in the most cultured court of Europe, and competed on equal terms with *trouvère* and *troubadour*. Even now Arthur's name is attached to places through the district, and on the oldest churches of Bretagne we find him figured, with sword and crown, in the act of triumphing over the beasts of the wild as the mythological hero. The far-away Arthur, growing distant in time, became to the inhabitants of Bretagne the hero that had fought and fallen, in the

* Fortunatus, l. VII., 170. (Quoted by Hersart de la Villemarqué, *Les Romans de la Table Ronde*, p. 168).

struggling dawn of their history, in what was now to them their mother country—the hero of fond memories, of traditional aspirations, the impersonation of all that was best and noblest in their golden age. And thus it was that, some five hundred years after the death of the historical Arthur, an Archdeacon of Oxford brought back, if we may credit tradition and Geoffrey of Monmouth, from Brittany an Armoric book—*quemdam Britannici sermonis librum vetustissimum* *—which professed to trace the history of the Britons from their first King, Brutus, to Cadwalader.

This Archdeacon, Walter Calenius, not Mapes, as is sometimes supposed, was in Armorica about 1125. There he found, or is supposed to have found, the *Brut y Brenhynned*, or *The Legend of the Kings*. Its authorship was attributed to Tysilio, though this is doubtful. Calenius being a Welshman, translated the Armorican epic into his native tongue.† Geoffrey of Monmouth translated the Welsh into Latin, under the title of *Chronicon sive Historia Britonum*, about 1128. Through the patronage of Robert of Gloucester, a descendant, by the mother's side, of the ancient British kings, this Latin version rapidly spread over Europe. In 1155 there appeared *Le Roman du Brut d'Angleterre*, by Robert Wace, afterwards Canon of Bayeux. This is in French verse, and is mainly a translation from the Latin of Geoffrey. These books were, however, the

* *Historia Regum Britanniæ*, Edition by Giles, p. 1.

† On this point see Villemarqué, *La Table Ronde*, p. 25, *et seq.*

source of a new intellectual life in Europe. They formed the basis of the whole mediæval romances regarding the British Arthur.

Arthur, and the traditions connected with him, were naturally the theme of the earliest Welsh or Cambrian literature. He appears especially in the *Triads of Arthur* of Caradoc of Llancarvan, collected before 1150. The *Mabinogion* of the fourteenth century, lately translated into English by Lady Charlotte Guest, represents the Arthurian legends as they had been developed in Wales up to that period. In the twelfth century the Arthurian legends excited the imaginative interest of Germany; and we have the *Parzwal* of Wolfram of Eschenbach, *Tristan and Isolt* of Gottfried of Strasburg, *Erec and Iwein* of Hartmann, the *Wigalois* of Wirnt. In Italian literature, says Villemarqué, "Dante owes to those legends his charming story of *Paolo* and *Francesca de Rimini*, a memory of Lancelot and Guinevere made living by genius. Ariosto borrows from them the history of *Merlin* and *Vivian*. Tasso has found in the forest of Broceliande the germ of that of Armidas." *

Ever since the twelfth century, and amid all the new elements in poetry, the picturing of social life and manners, the direct feeling and description of nature introduced by Chaucer, the symbolism of the impassioned imagination, we may observe the influence on the poetry of England of the cycle of the Arthurian legends. Chaucer himself

* *La Table Ronde*, p. 174.

felt their power. Lord Sackville's *Ferrex and Porrex*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the *Polyolbion* of Drayton, show marks of the same inspiration. It was the early and long cherished design of Milton to make the Arthurian period the subject of an epic. He was haunted and stirred by

> "What resounds
> In fable or romance of Uther's son,
> Begirt with British or Armoric knights."

And in the lines to Mansus, he says:—

> "Si quando indigenas revocabo in carmine reges,
> Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem!
> Aut dicam invictæ sociali foedere Mensæ
> Magnanimos Heroas, et, O modo spiritus adsit,
> Frangam Saxonicas Britonum sub marte phalanges!"*

Spencer is throughout instinct with the spirit of the Arthurian Romances; and the same ideal haunted the imagination of Dryden:—

> "Dryden in immortal strain
> Had raised the Table Round again,
> But that a ribald King and Court
> Bade him toil on to make them sport,
> Demanded for their niggard pay,
> Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
> Licentious satire, song and play;
> The world defrauded of the high design,
> Profaned the God-given strength and marred the lofty line."

* Works, ed. Todd, VI., p. 357.

And we well know the influence of those legends in our own day on Southey, Scott, and Tennyson.

Sir Thomas Malory's famous collection of the legends, printed by Caxton in 1485, and compiled from scattered French sources, or simply translated from a French compend, is the source whence Tennyson has chiefly drawn in his *Idylls of the King*. We may add the *Tristram* and *Iseult* of Matthew Arnold, Morris' *Defence of Guenevere*, Edgar Quinet's *Merlin*, and Richard Wagner's *Lochengrin* and *Tristan et Iseult*.

An immortality of memory has thus followed the British Guledig. He has been, as it were, a permanent personality all through the ages, pre-mediæval and mediæval as well, to which the better aspirations of the times successively turned, and which in each epoch was made to reflect the varying forms of its ideal. At first, historically, the champion of the race and liberties of the ancient Britons, he became, mythologically, the lord of the powers of nature and of universal battle, in order to soothe superstitious fears; then, in the twelfth century, he was idealised as the Christian leader and the flower of knighthood to inspire the Crusaders. All through this mythical idealisation, however, we can see a noble moral element. While he is the highest ideal of excellence which personal prowess and personal qualities can reach, the soul of the social order of the time, continually warring against some form of evil, he is not himself stainless. He is even "the embodi-

ment of the evil conscience of the time," in the picture of social and domestic disorder flowing from his wife's sin and his own far deeper and darker guilt; and yet he constantly typifies the unquestioned supremacy of personal quality, the nobility of knighthood founded on personal achievements, and, above all, a faith in a coming readjustment of things in accordance with the principles of a righteous moral order. The Vale of Avalon, or the halls of the Eildons, hold one who does not and cannot die, and who will come again to earth, because he represents a belief in the ultimate power of the right, which is immortal in the heart of man.

"Hic jacet Arthurus rex quondam rexque futurus."

III.

EARLY HISTORY OF THE LOWLANDS OF SCOTLAND—THE KINGDOMS OF STRATHCLYDE AND NORTHUMBRIA.

It seems not unlikely that when Octa and Ebissa established themselves in the district immediately south of the Forth and in the eastern portion of the country, they had to contend with the Picts or Northern Caledonians. They appear to have subjugated the Britons or original inhabitants, and to have obtained a hold of the portion of what is now Edinburgh and Linlithgow, bordering on the Forth, between the Carron and the Pentland or Pehtland Hills. This formed the kingdom of the Brithwyr or speckled people, and was called Manau Gododin. The Frisians, under Octa and Ebissa, got possession of this territory, and hence the early name given to the Firth of Forth, the *Mare Frenessicum*. Arthur, the Guledig, fought in the interest of the Cymri against both Angles and Picts in this district. At the time of his twelve battles it seems probable that the Picts had again risen to supremacy in Manau Gododin, and after his death, in 537, extended their sway over the eastern

portion of the country held by the Angles, and now represented by the counties of East Lothian, Berwick, and Roxburgh. The Pictish power in this district came to an end after a fresh struggle with the Angles; and Ida, in 547, became the first King of Bernicia. But there can be little doubt that even after this the Picts formed a large and distinctive element in the population of Bernicia, so much so that this was spoken of as Pict and Angle.* And the Picts were long predominant in numbers in Manau Gododin, after they had been subjected by the Angles.

One indication of the presence of the Picts is the remains of the well-known *Catrail* or *Picts Work Ditch*, which formed the boundary to the west of the Angle Kingdom of Northumberland. This was probably raised by the Picts as a protection to their territory from the Cymri of the west, and when they were dispossessed or subjugated, it became the boundary line of the new Angle kingdom. The other supposition is that it was the work of the Cymri of Strathclyde, to defend their territories from the Angles of the east. This ancient rampart cannot now be traced in a continuous line; but its remains appear here and there so definitely as to enable one to delineate its general course. These remains are first noticed on the side of Peel Fell, one of the Cheviots, near the source of the Liddel. The rampart then passes

* Mr. Skene regards Dunbar, originally *Dyunbaer*, as Pictish. And of course we have the well-known *Peanfahel*, head of the wall, which in Cymric is *Penguaul*, and in Angle, *Penneltun*.

north-eastwards across the Dawstane Burn, at or near the point where Aidan, King of the Scots of Dalriada, in alliance with the Cymri of Strathclyde, suffered disastrous defeat by the Angle King of Northumbria. It then crosses the hill-tops, and dips down the hill-side that slopes to the Slitrig; crosses the public road and railway in the valley of the stream above Shankendshiel; ascends the height on the north side, and passes over into the Allan Water, which it crosses about two miles from its junction with the Teviot; then cuts through the valley of the Teviot and wends up Commonside Hill. It is seen afterwards on Hoscoat Burn, and by Clearburn Loch; then on the Stand Knowe at the head of Stanhope Burn, where there is a strong fort.* It then passes downwards to Deloraine, crosses the valley of the Ettrick, ascends by Gilmanscleuch, and appears on Sundhope Hill; thence it crosses the valley of the Yarrow at Redhawse, ascends the Swinebrae Hill above Yarrow Kirk, passes Henhillhope, and runs along the south-east declivity of Minchmoor. It then goes north-eastward across the Tweed near the mouth of Howden Pot Burn. It is seen distinctly on Rink Hill, and terminates at Mossilee, near the junction of the Tweed and the Gala. In most places now the work appears almost like a brown benty road across the moor, so completely have central ditch and lateral ramparts disappeared under the wild winter

* It is marked on the Ordnance Map as at Stanhope Foot. There are no traces of it there, and the locality is entirely out of its line.

storms of those uplands during the last fourteen centuries. Its entire length is fifty miles. It is a fair walk for two summer days. Its general character in the early part of the century has been thus described:—"It is a ditch and rampart of irregular dimensions, but in breadth generally from twenty to twenty-four feet, supported by many hill-forts and corresponding entrenchments. . . . The Catrail is very happily situated for the protection of the mountainous country, as it just commences where the valley of the Tweed becomes narrow and difficult of access, and skirts the mountains as it runs southwards."* It would be more properly described as a great central ditch, with a rampart on each side. The ramparts were formed of the loose soil and stones dug out of the ditch. The height of rampart was, when measured in the end of last century, from 6 to 10 feet, and the thickness from 8 to 12 feet. The same authority regards the Catrail as the work of the Britons, and as a means of defence set up by them against the Saxon or Angle invaders of Bernicia. The traditional name, however, points to the Picts as the framers of the rampart, though this is by no means decisive. But it is, on the whole, more likely that a defence of this sort would be raised by the dwellers on the plains, against the dwellers on the hills, than *vice versâ*. The mountains naturally afford a protection to the mountaineer; the plains are naturally defenceless. The shortness of the period during which the

* Sir Walter Scott, *Border Antiquities*, Int., p. xxiv.

Picts held Bernicia, accounts for the nearly entire absence of other traces of their works and language. The distinctive Pictish appellations are not found in the district, and the traces of the so-called *duns* or Picts' houses are not numerous. Now, indeed, these can hardly be traced with definite certainty.

With the establishment of the Angle kingdom of Bernicia, under Ida, in 547, there commences a more definite course of history, from which we really learn how the Lowlands of Scotland, and Scotland itself, have come to be what they are.* Ida's kingdom of Bernicia, originally Bryneich, stretched from the Tees on the south, to the Firth of Forth on the north. It included the northern counties of Durham, Northumberland, Roxburgh (in part), Berwick, Haddington, and part of Edinburgh. Westwards it seems to have stretched up Teviotdale as far as the Catrail, and up the Tweed as far as the junction of the Gala. Here the Gala formed its north-west boundary.

The country south of the Tees to the Humber, that is now included in Yorkshire, was occupied by a people identical with the Angles and Frisians of Bernicia. This district was

* For the main facts and dates connected with the kingdoms of Northumbria and Strathclyde after this period, I am indebted to Mr. W. F. Skene. I cheerfully acknowledge my obligations to one who by remarkable industry, rare acuteness, and careful induction, has done so much to throw light on the early history of his country. I do not hesitate to say that what Niebuhr did for the history of Rome, Skene has done for the history of Scotland. See especially *The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, I., C. X., and *Celtic Scotland, passim.*

called Deira, originally Deifr; and the two districts of Bernicia and Deira were called Nordhymbraland, or the land north of the Humber. They were united into one kingdom under Ella about 559. But whether Bernicia and Deira formed one kingdom or two usually depended on the varying fortune of war. The capital of Bernicia was Bebbanburh, now Bamborough, so called after Bebba, wife of Aedilfrid, or Aethelfrid, King of Bernicia. The capital of Deira was York.

The Angles of Bernicia formed the aggressive element in the country. For four hundred years there was nearly constant war between them and the Cymri to the west. Bernicia was held by the four sons of Ida in succession. One of these, Hussa, was King of Bernicia in 567. With him contended four Kings of the Britons, viz., Urbgen (or Urien), Riderchen, Guallauc, and Morcant. They probably represented a confederation of the Cymric principalities, which were still independent. Riderchen, or Rhydderch Hael, that is, the liberal, was of Roman descent. Another line of princes of the Cymri was of native origin. This was represented by Gwendoleu, descended from Coil Hen, or the aged. Rydderch Hael and his family came under the influence of the Christianity of the Columban Church. Gwendoleu and the native line remained outside of this influence, and were at the head of the paganism and Bardism of the time. The principalities scattered over the Tweed and the Clyde thus came to be divided into two

parties, the one holding by the old Druidic or Nature worship, and the other by the new faith. The matter of supremacy must come to the arbitrament of the sword; and come it did with fatal and final issue in the great battle of Arderydd, fought in 573 between the Liddel and the Esk, about 9 miles north of Carlisle. The leader of the Christian party, Rydderch Hael, the prince, apparently, of Lanark, was assisted by Aidan, afterwards king of the Scots of Dalriada, and by Maelgwn Gwynedd. Gwendoleu led the Pagan and opposing confederacy. The battle was long, and the number of the dead was fabulously great. No doubt it was a crucial fight, to be paralleled only by subsequent national contests. The memory of that day's struggle by the Liddel, between brother Cymri, saddened Cymric song for many generations. The result of it, however, was the death of Gwendoleu, the triumph of the Christian Cymri, and the establishment of one Cymric kingdom under Rydderch Hael, to be known afterwards for many centuries as Strathclyde, and its inhabitants as the Strat-Clud Wealas, or Walenses, with Alclud, or Dunbreaton, as its capital. This kingdom of Alclyde stretched from Alclyde up through the valley of the Clyde, across the watershed, down the Tweed to its mouth, and beyond that southwards to Carlisle, and westwards to the Derwent. "It comprehended Cumberland and Westmoreland, with the exception of the baronies of Allerdale or Copeland in the former, and Kendal in the latter, and the counties of Dumfries, Ayr, Renfrew, Lanark,

and Peebles in Scotland. On the east the great Forest of Ettrick separated it from the Angles, and here the ancient rampart of the Catrail, which runs from the south-east corner of Peeblesshire, near Galashiels, through the county of Selkirk to the Peel Hill on the south side of Liddesdale, marked the boundary between them."* Besides Alclyde, it had as towns Penrynwleth, on the Clyde; Lanark, the glade in the wood; Peebles, or the shielings; Kelso (Calchvynyd); and Caer Luel (Carlisle), all names of British origin, and thus indicating very ancient towns. With the exception of Galloway, on the south, inhabited by the Piethwyr, or Pictmen, with whom a Gaelic race was afterwards intermingled, and Bryneich, or Bernicia, the northern part of the Angle Kingdom of Northumberland, on the east coast, the whole of the country from Loch Lomond and the Lennox, to the Derwent in Cumberland, was embraced by the British Kingdom of Strathclyde. North-west of the Firth of Clyde, in Argyll, lay the Scots' Kingdom of Dalriada, over which Aidan, the friend of Rydderch Hael, had just been consecrated King by Columba. The Picts and Men of Moray held the north and east of the island. As yet Scotland was not. It had to arise out of the struggles and the fusion of those contending races. Yet obviously, even now some progress towards unity had been made. The strength of mere individualism had been organized; distinct kingdoms had

* Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, I., pp. 235-6. For a more accurate description of the line of the Catrail, see above, p. 96.

been constituted out of small principalities; the monarch accepted consecration from the priest, and thus recognised the influence of unseen power and of moral idea as a rule of life. Brute strength was no longer to be held as the only power which a man should own. Organisation and obedience to idea are the two initial steps of civilisation.

Immediately on the victory of Arderydd, Kentigern, the friend and counsellor of Rydderch Hael, was recalled from Wales by the king, and made Bishop of Strathclyde. This territory afterwards became the *parochia*, or Bishopric of Glasgow. Rydderch, who was intimate with Columba, continued to reign at Alclyde until his death in 603. Columba himself had died in 596—

"In Abererch is the grave of Rydderch Hael."*

The subsequent history of the Kingdom of Strathclyde shows a gallant struggle against Angle, Pict, and Dane. It preserved an independent existence, though often sadly harassed and reduced, for upwards of three hundred and fifty years. In fact, nothing is more striking than the persistent nationality of the ancient Britons. Theodoric was King of Bernicia from 580 to 587. He is the *Flamddwyn*, or flame-bearer of the bards. Urien, who held Reged, a province to the north of Alclyde, and his son Owen, led the Cymri against the Flame-bearer. They had many con-

* *Verses of the Graves.*

tests. Once they met him in that part of the vale of Gala Water, the Gwenystrad, where Arthur, some forty years before, had so signally defeated the sons of Hengist. To the Angles this dale became a two-fold Wedale, or dale of woe. The great fort of Guinnion was the key to the Angle Kingdom of Bernicia on the west, and round it battle between Angle and Cymri would fiercely rage and storm—

"The men of Catraeth arose with the dawn,
About the Guledig.

The men of Prydain, hurtful in battle array,
At Gwenystrad, continuously offerers of battle.

In defending Gwenystrad was seen
A mound and slanting ground obstructing.
In the pass of the ford I saw men gory-tinted.

Hand on the cross they wail on the gravel bank of Garanwynyon.

I saw a brow covered with rage on Urien,
When he furiously attacked his foes at the White Stone
Of Galystem." *

The following lines are but a prefiguration of what has not unfrequently happened in Border warfare since those early times :—

"A Saxon, shivering, trembling,
With hair white-washed,
And a bier his destiny,
With a bloody face." †

* *Book of Taliessin*, XXXI., Skene, I., p. 344. † *Ibid.*, XXXIV.

Here is Urien in his power—

"If there is a cry on the hill,
Is it not Urien that terrifies,
If there is a cry in the valley,
Is it not Urien that pierces?
If there is a cry in the mountain,
Is it not Urien that conquers,
If there is a cry in the slope,
Is it not Urien that wounds?

A cry of a journey over the plain,
A cry in every meandering vale." *

But he "that overcame the land of Bryneich" at last met the hero's fate, and the Cymric bard, with his true-hearted pathos, knew well how touchingly to wail the dead, as he could nobly honour the living. We are told, in many turns of the passionate reiteration of grief, that

"The delicate white corpse will be covered to-day
Under the greensward and a tumulus." †

His son, too, Owen, beloved of the bards, succumbed in fight, meeting his death at the hand of the Flamddwyn, the foe of his race. And Taliessin, the friend of father and son tells us that,

"When Flamddwyn killed Owain, there was not one greater than he sleeping;" ‡

* *Book of Taliessin*, XLIV.

† *Book of Taliessin*, XXXIV.; Skene, *Books of Wales*, I., p. 349.

‡ Taliessin in *Book of Hergest*, XII.; Skene, *Books of Wales*, I., p. 357.

or, as it was put by a still earlier poet of heroes—

> "Ne'er to the mansions where the mighty rest,
> Since their foundation, came a nobler guest."

No one with a heart can read those grand old odes of that dim and awe-inspiring time, without feeling the touches of human life that are in them, and being persuaded that when the bard spoke of the prince of his day as the oak, and the spirit of the Cymri as the lightning's gleam,* he was but using impassioned language which truly symbolized the real. And one cannot help being struck by the contrast in the Vale of Wedale between those early and the later times, since the savage shouts of Cymri and Angle in deadly conflict have passed into the everlasting silence, and the peace of the dale is broken only by bleatings on the hill-sides, and its green braes show no stain of blood—only the sweet flickering play of the sunshine on the grass—a scene meet for a lay of the softer passions—when the lass could sing—

> "O'er yon bank and o'er yon brae,
> O'er yon moss amang the heather,
> I'll kilt my coats abune my knee,
> And follow my love through Gala Water."

Aethelric was the last of the sons of Ida who succeeded to the throne of Bernicia. His son was Aëdelfrid, or Ethelfrid. He once again united Deira to Bernicia. He is

* *Taliessin*, XXXVII.

reputed to have been the greatest aggressor on the Cymri known to history. Bede tells us that he made part of them tributary, seized portions of their territory, exterminating or subjugating the original inhabitants.* He added to Bernicia the district on the west between the Derwent and the Mersey, and thus broke up the continuity between the Britons of Wales and Strathclyde. Aidan, the first consecrated king of the Scots of Dalriada, came against Aethelfrid with a large and powerful army, consisting of Scots, Britons, and Irish Picts. These were banded together by a common Christianity, that of St. Columba, besides having greater affinity of race with each other than with the Angles. The army of Aidan and that of Aethelfrid met on the boundary line of the kingdom of Northumbria, at a point on the Catrail, high up in the mountains by the sources of the Liddel. Bede names the spot *Degsastan*, and there is little difficulty, as Mr. Skene has shown, in identifying it with Dawstane.† The great boundary rampart passes here by Dawstane burn and Dawstanerig. Aidan, with his Scots and Cymri, suffered a terrible defeat, and from that year of 603 until more than thirty years afterwards, no king of the Scots or Cymri dared to give battle to the Angles of Northumberland. In the end Aethelfrid was slain by Edwin, in 617—the same who gave his name to Edwinsburgh or Edinburgh. Edwin, in turn, fell in battle with Cædwalla, and Penda, King of the Mercians, in 633.

* *Historia*, l. i., c. 34. † *Celtic Scotland*, i., p. 162.

The Britons of Strathclyde, and the Scots of Dalriada, had hitherto been usually combined against Angle and Pict. The Cymri all along hated the Picts fervently. Taliessin refers to them as "the Gwyddyl, devils, distillers."* Again he speaks of them as

> "Kiln-distillers,
> Intoxicating the drunkards.
>
> * * * * * * * * *
>
> Didactic bards, with swelling breasts, will arise,
> Who will meet around mead vessels
> And sing wrong poetry,
> And seek rewards that will not be,
> Without law, without regulation, without gifts." †

This harmony of co-operation between Briton and Scot was interrupted in 642, when Domnal Breac, King of Dalriada, attacked the Cymri, and was slain in battle by Oan, or Owen, King of the Britons, in Strathcarron. With the death of Domnal Breac, the line of Aidan ceased, and the kingdom itself probably became subject to the Britons. At this point it would almost seem that in the struggle for supremacy in Scotland, the original Cymri bid fair to gain the prize. Subsequently, even the name of Dalriada disappeared from the Irish chronicles.

Under Oswald, who was slain in 642, and his brother Osuiu, who died in 670, two powerful kings of Northumbria, encroachment was made upon the territories of the Britons

* *Book of Taliessin*, XIV. † *Ibid.*, I.

of Alclyde, the Scots of Dalriada, and the southern Picts—that is, those between the Forth and the Tay. The whole of these tribes seem, indeed, to have been under subjection to the King of Northumberland for thirty years,—from the time of Osuiu to the death of his son and successor, Ecgfrid, in 685, who fell at Nechtan's Mere, near Dunnichen, fighting against Bridei, King of the revolted Picts. Those Picts who had been subject to Northumbria, the Britons, and the Scots, regained their independence, and retained it for at least forty-six years. The Angles, however, still retained the Cymric territory between the Derwent and the Solway, of which Carlisle was the central city. In other words, they kept up for future issues the broken continuity of the Cymri. A powerful combination was now formed against the Cymric kingdom. Eadberct, King of Northumbria, and Angus Mac Fergus, King of the Picts, united their forces for the purpose of subjugating the Britons of Strathclyde. On the 1st of August, 756, they received the submission of the Britons at Alclyde. This subjection continued for some time. But a new event occurred in the history of the island, which served to withdraw the attention of the Angle kings from the Britons. This was the landing for the first time in Northumbria of the formidable Danes and Norwegians, on the coast at Lindisfarne, in 793. Northumbria was now under the power of the Kings of Wessex, and from this time onwards until 954, there was almost a constant struggle between the Danes and the Saxons to retain Northumber-

land. The great battle of Brunnanburg, in 925, was one of those trials of strength for supremacy between Dane and Saxon, in which the Dane was worsted. In 944, King Eadmund subdued Northumberland, and expelled the two Danish kings in possession, viz., Anlaf, son of Sitriuc, and Regnald, son of Guthfrith. The principal seat of the Danes at this period was Dublin, whence they ruled the western Isles and western coast of Scotland. They had passed through the territories of the Britons of Strathclyde to Northumbria, and had obtained their help. Eadmund, in 945, after expelling the Danes from Northumbria, in revenge ravaged all Cumbria, and gave it up to Malcolm King of the Scots, on condition "that he should be his co-operator on sea and land." This has very unwarrantably been regarded as a recognition of the feudal supremacy of England over Scotland. The truth is that Scotland was not yet constituted into one kingdom. The idea of feudalism was not developed or understood in Britain at this time, and even if it had been so developed, it could have applied only to the territory which the King of the Scots acquired from the King of the Saxons, without extending to the other parts of the kingdom.

When Edmund obtained possession of Cumbria, a name now for the first time applied to Strathclyde, the King of the district was Donald. He was the son of Eugenius, King of Strathclyde, who figured in the battle of Brunnanburg. Donald, or Domnal, may appear in the form of Dunmail;

and Dunmail, "the last King of rocky Cumberland," is said to have fallen in battle with the Saxon on the watershed of Dunmail Raise, under the shadow of Helvellyn, between urn-like Grasmere and wooded Thirlmere.*

In 954, ten years after the destruction of the independent kingdom of Strathclyde, Northumberland sunk to an Earldom under Eadred Aetheling. In the reign of Indulph, son of Constantine, King of Alban, 954-962, the Scots obtained possession of Dunedin or Edinburgh, and the adjacent territory between the Esk and the Avon. This they never subsequently lost.

Again, in 975, we find that the line of the British kings still subsisted. Probably they were now subject to the King of the Scots. In 997 Malcolm, the son of Donald, King of the North Britons, died. Then, between 997 and 1004, Kenneth, son of Dubh, King of Alban, successfully withstood Aethelfrid, King of England, who sought to wrest Cumbria from him.

In 1018, Malcolm, son of Kenneth, invaded Northumbria along with Eugenius, or Owen, the Bald, King under Malcolm of the Britons of Strathclyde. They reached Carham, on the Tweed, where a battle was fought, a spot afterwards to be still more prominent in history as the scene of the meeting of Edward I. and the Barons of Scotland. Here

* Scott, curiously enough, places Dunmail Raise on Windermere. This was in 1814, in the introduction to the *Antiquities of the Border*, p. 25. The mistake seems never to have been corrected.

the Northumbrians were defeated; and the whole district north of the Tweed was given up to the King of Scots. The northern part of Bernicia came now to be known as Lodonia, or Lothian. The Tweed became the southern boundary of the Kingdom of the Scots. Eugenius was slain this year, either in the battle of Carham or elsewhere. With him terminated the line of the Kings of Strathclyde, who were of the same stock with Malcolm himself, for Run, the progenitor of the Kings of Strathclyde, had married a daughter of Kenneth Macalpine.* Malcolm, the first King of "Scotia," died in 1034. With him the male line of Kenneth Macalpine became extinct. His grandson, Duncan, succeeded. Then there comes the Macbeth episode. By help of Siward, the Danish earl of Northumbria, which was now limited to the district between the Humber and the Tweed, Malcolm, the son of the murdered Duncan, was put in possession of Cumbria and Lothian. Three years afterwards, in 1057, he slew Macbeth at Lumphanan in Marr, and thus obtained a firm hold of his father's crown. With him, known as Malcolm Canmore, the history of modern Scotland properly begins. William the Conqueror seized Cumbria, but restored it to Malcolm in 1072. Malcolm "became his man," whatever that may be supposed to mean.

Malcolm Canmore married, first, Ingibiorg, the daughter of Earl Thorfinn; secondly, Margaret, the sister of Edgar

* See Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, I., p. 393 *et seq.*

Aetheling. The influence of Margaret upon her sons civilised and Christianised Scotland.

Edgar, the son of Malcolm and Margaret, reigned from 1098 to 1107. He was succeeded by his brother, Alexander I. Edgar bequeathed to his youngest brother, David, the eastern district from the Lammermoor Hills to the Tweed, and the western portion of the country from the Firth of Clyde to the Solway—in other words, the greater part of Laodonia, formerly Bernicia, and all that remained in the power of the Scottish kings of the territory of Strathclyde or Cumbria. On Edgar's death, David then became Earl or Comes of Cumbria, which he ruled as Prince with something like an independent jurisdiction. When he became king, in 1124, it was united under one government to Scotland, that is, to the part of the island north of the Forth inhabited by Pict and Scot and the Men of Moray. Had his brother Edgar lived and transmitted the northern kingdom to a son, we might have had Scotland split up thenceforward into Scotland north of the Forth, and what is now the Lowlands. Cumberland, or the part of Cumbria south of the Solway, was ceded by William the Lion, after his defeat at Alnwick, to Henry II. in 1153. It was finally annexed to England in 1237, and the present boundary between England and Scotland practically established.

Notwithstanding the incorporation of Strathclyde or Cumbria with Scotland, the inhabitants still bore the Welsh name, and were mainly Cymric, till past even the time

of David I. They were known as the Strathclwyd Wealas, or Walenses. At the battle of the Standard, in 1138, the "Cumbrenses" and the "Tevidalenses," or Britons of Strathclyde, formed the second division of the heterogeneous army called Scots, which was led to disaster by the Scottish King.

The latest reference we have to the Britons or Cumbrenses of Strathclyde as still a distinct race, is in the reign of Malcolm IV., about 1165. After that they seem to have wholly merged in the general population. Their language as a spoken dialect had evidently disappeared even in the time of David I., in whose reign the recognition of the ancient existing Burghs, their re-constitution, and the collection of the old Burgh Laws, were marked events. The laws were originally given in Latin, but the Angle words embodied shew the character of the popular language of David's time, and even of that of his predecessors. The language which succeeded the ancient British in Cumbria was obviously the Angle or broad-vowelled branch of the Saxon, in fact, the language of the adjacent kingdom or province of Northumbria, a dialect more closely connected with the Frisian and Scandinavian than with the Saxon of middle England. This absorption of the Cymri and their spoken language points to a large immigration from Northumbria, and probably other parts of England, of the common people, who were feeling the pressure of the feudal manners and the forest laws south of the Tweed.

The charter lists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries show a great preponderance of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman names of persons on the Tweed. Here and there a British name crops up. But it is rare. And now I do not know that we can point to more than two names of families, which might with probability be referred to a British origin. These are *Welsh*, and *Ker* or *Caer*. *Welsh* is Teutonic, meaning *foreigner*, and was a name applied by the Saxons to the Cymri. Welsh may fairly be regarded as the representative of Weala, or Walensis, the old national name given by the Saxons, as Fleming indicates another nationality. The Welshes abounded during the middle ages in Tweedsmuir, one of the most remote fastnesses of the Britons, and their representatives are still to be found there, as shepherds, farmers, and lairds. *Ker* is no doubt from *Caer*, a fort, a designation plentifully sprinkled over the hills of Tweeddale. Johannes Ker, Venator, is in Swinehope, now Soonhope, in a charter of the year 1200. And John has left a like-named hill in that beautiful glen, full of old remains, where probably he had his dwelling, the *Caersmann*, the place of the fort. I am inclined to attribute the surname *Wallace* to the same British origin. Its earliest form is *Walense*, which is the Latinised form of *Weala* or *Wealas*. Glen and Craig are not necessarily Cymric names, for a Saxon subsequently dwelling in the one or by the other, might adopt the surname; whereas Caer did not survive the Angle occupation as a local name, except in composition.

I have thus sought to indicate the position of the Cymri in our national history, because it is a chapter in that history which is comparatively little known. And, further, these people do not occupy a place which is that of a mere broken past; our life is continuous with theirs; perhaps it is so through blood, and imaginative impulses which now and again have made, as has been suggested, their appearance in the course of our literature, in our sentiment, in our melancholy and despair, and in our defiant protest against the despotism of fact in the interests of memory or of a higher ideal. On this I do not give any opinion; but I feel sure that these old Cymri are connected with us in the inspiration of romance, which has passed from them to the continent of Europe, especially to Brittany, and back again to us. If we wish to recur to the fountain whence have sprung Arthurian tradition, and its accompanying weird and heroic ideals, if we wish to see the first out-wellings of that romance which has raised us above self and commonplace and conventionalism, which has influenced English poetry from Chaucer to Tennyson, we must go back to that Cymric people who loom so dimly in the early dawn of our history, the comfort of whose simple life was broken up by harassing war, who showed such a spirit of defence, who suffered so greatly and bore so patiently, and in exile longed so grandly and hoped so nobly for the sight of their native hills. The fountains of romance for Britain and for Europe first opened

amid the southern uplands of the kingdom of Strathclyde. I am not using the language of exaggeration when I say that the deeds, the sufferings, particularly the exile into Brittany, and the songs of the Cymri of the Tweed, grew into mediæval gest and romance; that the breath of those uplands gave inspiration to the literature of Europe in the twelfth century; as the ballad epics of the unknown minstrels of the Borders freshened it once again in the early part of this century of ours.

IV.

CYMRIC WORSHIP—EARLY CHRISTIANITY—NINIAN—KENTIGERN—CUTHBERT.

THE religious worship of these early Cymri of the Tweed, and the efforts made to bring them to Christianity, recall to us names that figure dimly in the early history of this northern part of the island. Their worship was what is known as Druidical, that is, it was a nature-worship, darkened by a mysterious haunting belief in the efficacy of human sacrifice. They were lovers, and probably worshippers, of hills, rivers, and fountains. They raised and venerated stones, or rather, amid their stone-circles on the sunny hill-side, they worshipped the sun god, the representative of the brighter side of nature—Baal, the fire-giver—and to him on the hill-tops they lit the fire on the 2d of May, the Beltane. The word still survives by the Tweed; the practice was not dead in last century. It has suggested to Motherwell a fine allusion:—

"The fire that's blawn on Beltane e'en
May weel be black gin Yule;

But blacker fa' awaits the heart
In which fond love grows cule."

In the shadows of the woods they knelt in awe before the darker powers of the world, or sought to propitiate them by secret gruesome sacrifice; for, besides the *Stone of the Sun*, they, like the Caledonian Gael, had the *Stone of the Cymbals*, the notes of which were meant to drown the voices of the sacrificial victims. The Council of Tours, in 567, admonishes the Britons for their nature-worship, their reverence of stones and worship of fountains—"Veneratores lapidum, excolentes sacra fontium admonemus."* To them also the air was full of spirits, and sons were born to these of their daughters—earthly, and yet superhuman in powers and sympathies. Of such was the weird Merlin, who could bend nature to his will, assume what shape he chose, and foresee the future; restless, withal, unhappy, maniacal, as holding in him a divine and human element that were unreconciled. This type of character arose from an inherent craving in man to be, somehow or other, the master of nature. Now we rule the world by a knowledge of scientific law; then men sought to rise above it as the lords of invisible powers. Controlling or dogmatic system of thought there was none in this early religion. Its powers were simply natural impressions, soul-impulses, the feeling of an unsubdued earth; varied, bright, and

* *Concilia Galliæ*, Baluze, p. 110. Quoted by De la Villemarqué, *La Table Ronde*, p. 46.

dark, soothing in sunshine, and awesome in storm and in overshadowing fears. Doubtless there would be vileness, brutality, cruelty; for unregulated naturalness leads to all that. We must have the rule of conscience, as well as the power of sense, in order to get true manhood. But there were touches of refinement, culture, superiority to low impulses—an inspiration from the soft and tender side of things. In the very earliest Cymric poems of the sixth century, there is love of the sweet spring blossom of the apple-tree, love of the fountain and of the forest shade, and a sense of soothing from the continuous yet fitful rush of the river in the long silence of the summer night. There was a good and pure element there which, renewed for a time in Chaucer, afterwards disappeared in a great measure from the course of the later literature of the country; and it has only come to its full development, if it really has done so, in our own time. God was to these nature-worshippers at least no isolated or otiose Deity. They sought and found Him in their daily life and daily round of impressions.

It is remarkable enough that the Caledonians north of the Forth, be they Scot or Pict, had points of worship closely in common with the Britons of Strathclyde. In fact, the worship of the island now called Britain pointed in these early times unmistakeably to a common, and probably an Eastern, origin. The Caledonian Gaels appear to have had a superstitious reverence for mountain and river.

They felt them to be enduring and surpassingly strong, while human life was but feeble and transitory. Hence they worshipped those objects of nature. We have names indicating the sense of power inscribed on mountains. Beinn-bhreac (Benvreach, Benvracky) is "the spotted mountain." In Sutherland *cli*, from *clith*, strong, is joined to this, and we have "the strong spotted mountain."* Then, sun-worship seems to have been universal among the ancient Caledonians north of the Forth. In Bernera, an island in the parish of Harris, there is a circle of stones, and in the centre of it there is a large one called "Clach na greine," *i.e.*, the stone of the sun.† And we have a marked approximation to the Druidic rites of the Strath-clyde Britons in "Clach-na-tiompan," the stone of the cymbals. *Clach*, a stone, *clachan*, a circle of stones, so constantly to be met with in the Highlands, refer apparently to a place of worship. In North Uist we have "Clach mohr a Ché," the great stone of Ché, the deity of the Caledonian Gael. Even now, or at least lately, one Highland man meeting another would say—"Are you going to the stones?" meaning, Are you going to worship?‡ That all this kind of religious feeling was Eastern, we have many significant hints. Annat or Andate was the goddess of victory, commemorated, for example, by a large stone in the Isle of Skye. She is mentioned by

* Robertson, *Gaelic Topography of Scotland*, p. 224.

† Robertson, *Ibid*, p. 270. ‡ Robertson, *Ibid*, p. 271.

Dio, and Origen. She was worshipped by the Assyrians and Persians. The name still remains in various parts of the Highlands.* Curiously enough, in a charter of James VI. to the burgh of Peebles, there is preserved the name of Annat's Hope, not far from the town.

It was among these nature-worshippers that the first Christian missionary on Tweedside carried on his labours. It was not until the twelfth century that there began to arise in Scotland a secular clergy or a parochial system. Previously to that time, Christianity was spread and sustained in the country only by individual missionary enterprise. The Cœnobite system, or "the family," was the prevailing one; the religious house, monastery, or abbey, planted in the most fertile part of a wide district, as, for example, Melrose, in the haughs of the Tweed—for the abbey was ancient even in the time of David I.—sent out zealous teachers and preachers into the surrounding wilds of forest and hill. † From his White House by the sea, St. Ninian, or St. Ringan, the teacher of Pict and Scot, had apparently, about the beginning of the fifth century, partially reached the Pagan Cymri of Tweeddale. The light that shone was probably evanescent enough. I am not aware that there is any surviving memorial of him in the district.

St. Ninian had been dead for some time; his tomb by the Molendinar had made the spot sacred, and near it there had arisen "an earthen rath and wattled church," to

* Robertson, *Gaelic Topography of Scotland*, p. 265.

† Innes, *Early Scottish History*, p. 9.

be superseded, yet perpetuated, many centuries afterwards by the noble and still untouched Cathedral Church of Glasgow. The missionary cause in the Borders was now, towards the middle of the sixth century, taken up by a young and zealous apostle of Christianity, the devoted Kentigern, better known as St. Mungo, "the Beloved." Amid much that is mythical, there is a quite definite historical element about Kentigern. He was the son of Theneu, the daughter of Loth, King of the Lothians; the father a relapsed Christian, "vir semi-paganus," the daughter an ardent but indiscreet devotee of the Christianity of the time. The mother had been committed by the enraged Loth to the sea in a wicker boat near Aberlady, but, after a stormy struggle, the waves gave her up alive in the bay of Culross. On the shore of that bay, according to the legend, "at morning dawn, by the side of a smouldering fire which shepherds or fishermen had left on the shore, with a bundle of twigs for her couch," her son was born. The child was baptised by St. Serf, and Kentigern was thenceforwards devoted to an ecclesiastical life.

Kentigern, with the ardour of the youthful convert, seems to have assailed the Druidic cultus in that part of Strathclyde, where height of mountain and depth of forest, in themselves favourable to the Druidic feeling, rendered the district least accessible to new influences. He spent eight years of his ministry on the Heriot Water at Lochquharret, or Locherwort, now Borthwick. He taught also the doctrines

of Christianity in the central part of the Wood of Caledon, what is now Tweedsmuir, or Tweedshaws. Adopting the Druidic notion of the sacredness of the fountain, wells were consecrated to him, or, it might be, the well in which he baptised was dedicated to his memory. We have, or had, St. Mungo's Well on the slopes of Venlaw, by the Tweed. The church of Stobo, a mother church, or *ecclesia plebania*, comprehending the churches of Dawyck, Broughton, Drummelzier, and Tweedsmuir, was apparently founded by him, or subsequently dedicated to him.

At length, when Christianity became strong enough to conquer the old Paganism, the missionary of Tweedside became the Bishop of the Borders, a position which he occupied until his death, in 603. His name is associated with churches in nearly every Border county, and these the oldest in the district. His memory was a quickening power in the land down to the time of David I., when, as Prince of Cumbria, in 1116, he made the famous *Inquisition* into the possessions of the Cathedral Church of Glasgow. We have references to him, chiefly as St. Mungo, all through the middle ages. He was, indeed, preeminently the Saint of the Clyde, the Tweed, and the Teviot, up to the Reformation. I cannot forbear quoting one reference to him; it is so characteristic of the mixture of quiet scorn and humour which mark the Border character. In the fifteenth century a pestilence threatened to cross the Border from England into Scotland; and the English

were good enough to say that it was sent upon the Borderers by God's grace for their repentance, whereupon a prayer was formulated and repeated fervently and generally among the Scottish Borderers:—"Gode and Saint Mungo, Saint Ronayn, and Saint Andrew, schield us this day fro Goddes grace, and the foul death that Englishmen dien on."*

After Kentigern came St. Cuthbert. Cuthbert was said to be of Irish descent, but we first find him a shepherd boy on the braes of the Leader, then in the kingdom of Northumbria, or North-hymbra-land, that bordered on Strathclyde, and touched it near Galashiels. In the Vale of the Leader, about 651, where afterwards the seer of Ercildoune had his fairy visions, the fervid shepherd boy saw one night angels descend from heaven, and then bear upwards the soul of Aidan of the Holy Isle. This led him to devote himself to a religious life, and he became an inmate of the Abbey of Melrose, then presided over by the zealous Boisil. After the death of Boisil from the plague, in 661, Cuthbert, who was then in the Abbey of Ripon, was recalled to Melrose, and became the Prior or head of the monastery, the original house which was founded by Aidan of Lindisfarne, who died in 651. The brief history of this early house, from its foundation until it was burned in 839, is rendered illustrious by the names of Eata, Boisil, Cuthbert, and Drycthelm. It was a home of learning and of

* Quoted by Bishop Forbes, *History of Scotland*, Vol. v., Introduction, p. cii. See Pinkerton, *History of Scotland*, Vol. i., p. 20.

pious zeal in a very dark period of our history. The more recent and more splendid Abbeys of David I. and Robert Bruce show, through their much longer annals, no name equal to even one of those that rendered honourable the early and humbler house. Cuthbert has left some faint traces of his missionary zeal on Tweedside. It was his practice, we are told, when Prior of Melrose, to be absent from the monastery for weeks at a time, dwelling and preaching in the remote solitudes of the Border Hills. And it was his habit "to frequent most those places, to preach most in those villages which lay far in the high and rugged mountains, which others feared to visit, and which by their poverty and barbarism repelled the approach of teachers."* The zealous preacher must have penetrated well into the wilds of Tweedsmuir, for there, by one of its most solitary mountain burns, remains at least the name of Chapel Kingledoors, founded by him, or, soon after his death in 687, dedicated to his memory. When we come downwards in the centuries to the days of charter evidence, we find attached to a very early document, of the year 1200, the name of Cristin, Heremita (hermit) of Kingledoors,† one who apparently devoted himself to study or teaching, after the Columban fashion, in that sequestered country. The spot made sacred by St. Cuthbert had thus preserved its sanctity

* Beda, *Hist. Eccles.*, IV., C. 27, quoted by C. Innes, *Early Scottish History.*

† *Divise de Stobbo, Reg. Glasg.*, I., No. 104.

for nearly six hundred years, until the rise of the parochial system.

Cuthbert subsequently became Prior, and then Bishop of Lindisfarne. *Marmion* has made us all acquainted with Saint Cuthbert's miracles, and the changes of his resting-place. He was buried, first of all, in Lindisfarne, in 687, but the descent of the Danes in 793, who nearly destroyed the monastery, made the monks flee to Scotland with the body of the Saint. After carrying about the body for seven years without finding a satisfactory resting-place, they brought it to Melrose, where the Saint had spent his early years. After remaining at Melrose for a short time, intimation was made to the monks of the will of the deceased bishop, that he should be launched upon the Tweed in a stone coffin. The coffin, according to the legend, floated down the stream with the relics, and landed at the mouth of the dark and sluggish Till as it joins the Tweed. There, in a small chapel, it found a temporary resting-place. He was finally buried in the eastern extremity of the choir of Durham Cathedral, and was disinterred in 1827, 1139 years after his death.

"Nor did St. Cuthbert's daughters fail
To vie with these in holy tale;
His body's resting-place, of old,
How oft their patron changed, they told,
How, when the rude Dane burned their pile,
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle;

O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years St. Cuthbert's corpse they bore.
They rested them in fair Melrose;
But though, alive, he loved it well,
Not there his relics might repose;
For wondrous tale to tell!
In his stone coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides,
Yet light as gossamer it glides.
Downward to Tilmouth cell.*

His intense activity continued apparently after his final burial, for we are told—

"Fain St. Hilda's nuns would learn,
If on a rock by Lindisfarne
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name:
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound;
A deaden'd clang—a huge dim form,
Seen but and heard when gathering storm
And night were closing round.
But this as tale of idle fame
The nuns of Lindisfarne disclaim.†

* *Marmion*, C. II., S. 14. † *Marmion*, C. II., S. 16.

V.

MERLIN.

It is at the great epoch of 573—the consolidation of the Cymri into the kingdom of Strathclyde—that a figure flits before us, shadowy indeed, yet apparently real, leaving a name around which are associated early myth and mediæval romance as richly as around that of Arthur himself—I mean the weird Merlin. The grave of Merlin, bard, seer, enchanter, wizard, is still pointed out on the bank of the Powsail Burn, the burn of the willows, near where it joins the Tweed below Drummelzier Kirk. The tradition is that in his later days he lived a wandering life on the wild hills of the Wood of Caledon in upper Tweeddale, until he met his death under the clubs and stones of the shepherds of Meldred, a regulus or princeling of the district.

A careful examination of the poems in the *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, and of the subsequent historians and romances, have led me to the following as the historical view of this potent and mysterious personage:—There were ap-

parently at least two men of the name Merlin. The earlier of the two was called Merlin Ambrosius, Aurelius Ambrosius, Myrdin Emrys. By some he was identified with Vortimer, the son of Vortigern, by others with Uther Pendragon. He, like the second Merlin, was reputed a wizard, born of a virgin and a spirit of the air. To this Merlin, Vortigern is said to have given up a city on the summit of Snowdon, and all the provinces of the west part of Britain, so that he became "rex magnus inter reges Britanniæ." Historically, he seems to have been a Guledig or leader of the Britons.

But the Merlin of Upper Tweeddale is a somewhat later and a different personage. He was called by the Welsh Myrdin Wyllt, or Merlin the Wild, Merlinus Sylvestris, or Woodland Merlin, and Merlinus Caledonius. He was reputed the son of Morvryn, and he had a sister Gwendydd, a name meaning the Dawn, whiteness, or purity, and redolent of the nature-worship and the poetry of the time. It was this Merlin who was present at the battle of Arderydd in 573. He was on the side of the defeated pagan Cymri under Gwendoleu. Gwendoleu himself was slain, as was also Merlin's nephew, the son of his sister Gwendydd. The nephew, indeed, is said to have fallen somehow under the hand of Merlin himself. After this disastrous battle, and the loss of his friend and patron Gwendoleu, Merlin fled to the upper district of the Tweed, the heart or centre of the Wood of Caledon, and passed the remainder

of his life, reputed insane, among the glens of the great broad hills then clothed in birch, hazel, and rowan, which, in crescent fold, sweep from the Dollar Law to the Broad Law, and from the watershed between the burns that flow northwards to the Tweed and those that run southwards to the Meggat water. There is no wilder or more solitary mountain-land in the south of Scotland than these high-spreading moors; there is no scene which could be more fitly assigned to a heart-broken and despairing representative of the old Druidic nature-worship, at once poet and priest of the fading faith, yet torn and distracted by secret doubts as to its truth, and not knowing well where his beloved dead had gone, or what was their fate in that mysterious spirit-world he felt was above and around him.

I know no more picturesque or suggestive episode in history or in fiction, than that of the reported meeting between Merlin and Kentigern amid the birk and hazel shaws on the upland wilds of Tweeddale, when the young apostle of Christianity pressed on the nature-worshipper the claims of the new faith. One day the saint was kneeling in solitary prayer in the wilds of Drummelzier, when a mysterious figure suddenly stood before him, weird-like, unearthly in look, "with hair growing so grime, fearful to see," terrible as an embodied fury. The Saint boldly asked him who and what he was. The reply was:—"Once was I the prophet of Vortigern [Gwendoleu], Merlin by name, now in this solitude enduring privations. . . . For I was

the cause of the slaughter of all those who fell in the well-known battle of Arderydd, which took place between the Lidel and Carvanolow." *

After a time the bard passed from the sight of Kentigern, more wildered, weary, and perplexed than before, to chase, if that might help him, the gleam and shade on the hills, and seek his heart solace in the pulsings of the burn and in communion with the creatures of the wilds.†

"Ah! well he loved the Powsail Burn,
Ah! well he loved the Powsail glen;
And there beside his fountain clear,
He soothed the phrenzy of his brain.
The wayward music of the stream
Found echo in the Poet's heart;
The fitful pulses of the burn
As broken rhythm of his art!"

There is every ground of probability for holding that the Tweeddale Merlin, or Merlin the Wild, is identical with the Cymric bard of the sixth century, certain of whose poems have come down to our own times. The incidents of the poems are precisely the incidents in the life of the Caledonian Merlin. There are two existing poems

* Fordun, *Scotichronicon*, L. III., C. 31.

† The reader may compare Waldhave's *Prophecies of Merlin*, referred to by Scott (*Minstrelsy*, III., p. 201). Waldhave was lying on Lomond Law, and he saw Merlin :—

"He was formed like a freike (man) all his four quarters,
And then his chin and his face haired so thick
With haire growing so grime, fearful to see."

of Merlin the Bard, which relate to the battle of Arderydd, at which he was present. We have them in the original Cymric, in the ancient and famous *Black Book of Caermarthen*, Nos. I. and XVII. The first is in the form of a dialogue between Merlin and Taliessin, who is reported to have been Merlin's master or instructor, and who is the most celebrated of the four Welsh Bards of the sixth or seventh century. It is a wail for the loss of the battle.

> "Seven score generous ones have gone to the shades;
> In the wood of Celyddon they came to their end.
> Since I, Myrdin, am next after Taliessin,
> Let my prediction become common." *

The other is the oldest existing form of the poem attributed to Merlin, the *Avellanau.* † It is a series of predictions regarding Cymric history, delivered in his character of prophet-bard. In it we have some curious glimpses of the poet himself, and in it too we have the hints of subsequent mediæval traditions, and of those mythic features which the romancers of Brittany and of the Middle Ages afterwards ascribed to the historic Merlin. Seated at the foot of an apple-tree, in the Wood of Caledon, he sings:—

> "Terrible to them were heroic forms.
> Gwendydd loves me not, greets me not;

* Skene, *Books of Wales*, I., p. 368.

† Skene, Ibid, I., p. 370; II., p. 335; Notes.

I am hated by the firmest minister of Rydderch;
I have ruined his son and his daughter.
Death takes all away, why does he not visit me?
For after Gwendoleu no princes honour me;
I am not soothed with diversion, I am not visited by the fair;
Yet in the battle of Arderydd golden were my torques,
Though I am now despised by her who is of the colour of swans.

* * * * * * * * * *

Sweet apple-tree which grows by the river side!
With respect to it the keeper will not thrive on its splendid fruit.
While my reason was not aberrant, I used to be around its stem
With a fair sportive maid, a paragon of splendid form.
Ten years and forty, as the toy of lawless ones,
Have I been wandering in gloom among sprites.

* * * * * * * * * *

Sweet apple-tree that grows in the glade!
Their vehemence will conceal it from the lords of Rydderch,
Trodden it is around its base, and men are about it.
Sweet apple-tree, and a tree of crimson hue,
Which grows in concealment in the Wood of Celyddon;
Though sought for their fruit, it will be in vain,
Until Cadwaladyr comes from the conference of Cadvaon,
To the Eagle of Tywi (Tweed) and Teiwi (Teviot) rivers;
And until fierce anguish comes from Aranwynion,
And the wild and long-haired ones are made tame."

This is one of the oldest poems in British literature; and it comes to us now as a sad wail from the depths of the Wood of Caledon, a note highly characteristic of that emotional Cymric temperament, which is powerful in impulse, daring in the onset, but, when baffled or defeated, is not effective in resource, rather finds relief in sentiment, in bewailing

and denouncing the harshness and the hardness of the adverse order of things.

Cadwaladyr, the son of Cadwallawn, was the great hope of the Cymric race; and under his father, who died in 659, the century succeeding Merlin, the Cymri had a short-lived success against their Anglo-Saxon opponents. But this hope of the Cymri was extinguished by the death of Cadwaladyr, in the pestilence of 664.*

Of Merlin, personally, we have one interesting notice in the verses of his friend and master Taliessin :—

> "And the load that the moon separates,
> The placid gentleness of Merlin." †

In other words, the bard, in his lucid intervals, was gentle as the fair light which the moon sheds abroad in heaven, through the break of the cloud which passes over it.

In the twelfth century, a Life of Merlin in Latin hexameter verse appeared—(*Vita Merlini Caledonii*, 1150). It is attributed to Geoffrey of Monmouth. By this time the mythic element had grown in a great measure round the historic character. Geoffrey represents Merlin, and, doubtless, on the ground of local tradition, as frequenting a fountain in the wilds of the Caledonian Forest. The fountain is on the summit of a mountain; it is shaded by hazels, and girt round by low copse-wood, or shaws. There Merlin was in the habit of sitting and gazing on the wide

* Skene, *Books of Wales*, I., p. 73. † Skene, II., p. 534.

expanse of woods around him. He watched the sportive movements of the creatures of the wilds, seeking thus to soothe the phrenzy of his brain.

As late as the time of James V., Merlin the Wild was in popular repute as prophet and bard. Sir David Lindsay amused the youthful king with "The prophecies of Rhymer, Bede, and Merlin." Certain prophecies of Merlin were current, and believed to have had their fulfilment about that period. This was especially true of his prediction regarding the death of the Regent Morton :—

> "In the mouth of Arran a selcouth (wonder) shall fall,
> Two bloody hearts shall be taken with a false traine,
> And derfly dung down without any dome."

The heart was the cognisance of Morton; and he was committed before his trial to James Stewart, the new Earl of Arran. In the execution of Morton there was fulfilled, according to popular belief, Merlin's "falling of the heart by the mouth of Arran." †

These and other prophecies of Merlin, like those attributed to the Rhymer were, of course, simply either mythical elaborations, or forgeries for political purposes of later times.

Merlin the Wild, in his wanderings, was haunted by a female form, known originally as Hwimleian, or Chwifleian, meaning "the gleam." This figure would appear and then disappear before him. She sought to shut him up,

* *Minstrelsy*, III., p. 206.

as he imagined, in one of the lonely crags of the hills, there to have him in her power, and to hold him for ever in bonds of affection. We can well understand how the phrenzied imagination of the Bard saw this figure in the glint of light that struck through the mist overhead; and how he watched it pass away across the glen as the hill haur darkened over the face of the sun; how he would dread it lurking in the shadows of the hazels, and see it in the moonbeams as they made lustrous the clear waters of his fountain. There can be no doubt that the Hwimleian of the Bard Merlin, the haunter of his life among the hills, the inspiration of

"The fosterer of song among the streams,"

became the Vivien or Nimiane of the mythic Merlin and of the mediæval romances. The sun-glints through the mists of the Drummelzier Laws have, in their personified and sublimated form, illumined the long, flowing stream of Romance through mediæval and modern times down to our own day. Therein the figure has assumed the form of the subtle tempter, seeking by low inducements to enthrall the seer, to master his kingly intellect by working on his moral weakness. And very variously has the story of her method of success been figured. According to one account,* his Nimiane having gained the secret of his art,

* *Merlin*, English Text Society, 1450-60, III., p. 681.

imprisoned him in a tower whose walls were neither of iron, nor stone, nor wood, but of air made adamantine by enchantment, in the far depths of the wood of Broceliande. Out of this tower he can never pass; but she, knowing the secret of the enchantment, may come and go to him as she pleases. Once, and once only, after his imprisonment, was his voice heard on earth, when he told a wandering knight, his friend, that this was his eternal doom, and prayed the knight to seek for him no more among living men. Again, according to Sir Thomas Malory,* his lady-love Nimiane, wearying of him, fearing him as a devil's son, wormed his art out of him, got him to go under a great rock, "to let her wit of the marvel there," and then contrived to shut him in, and so left him—a very excellent method, when it is possible, of getting rid of a troublesome lover.

The latest poetic form in which Merlin appears is in the "Vivien" of Tennyson, in the *Idylls of the King*. The picture is a pretty close copy of the lower or degraded conception of the Merlin of the middle ages. This is a composite of the two historical Merlins, and something more. He is mysteriously born, a spirit's son; he is wizard, yet Christian, and not pagan. His highest principle is serving Arthur by his wizard arts, regardless of the laws of truth and the dictates of morality. He is, in fact, the impersonation of intellectual subtlety, subordinate to a

* *Morte d'Arthur*, B. IV., C. I.

narrow, even low, sense of moral law, unless we regard the advancement of Arthur and the Arthurian idea as the inborn law of his life, the realization of which redeems all the violations of ordinary morality. Vivien, wicked, artful, cunning, cloaking her ambition in the guise of love, plies her woman's wiles, and finally succeeds in gaining the knowledge of his secret art: it is coarse temptation conquering transcendent intellectual power:—

"A storm was coming, but the winds were still,
And in the wild woods of Broceliande,
Before an oak, so hollow, huge, and old,
It look'd a tower of ruin'd mason work,
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

* * * * * * * * *

She set herself to gain
Him, the most famous man of all those times,
Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,
Had built the King his havens, ships, and halls,
Was also Bard, and knew the starry heavens,
The people called him wizard. . . .
For Merlin once had told her of a charm,
The which if any wrought on any one,
With woven paces and with waving arms,
The man so wrought on ever seem'd to lie
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,
From which was no escape for evermore,
Nor could he see but him who wrought the charm,
Coming and going, and he lay as dead,
And lost to life and use and name and fame.
And Vivien ever sought to work the charm
Upon the great Enchanter of the Time,
As fancying that her glory would be great
According to his greatness whom she quench'd."

After describing the various wiles which Vivien used, we are told the issue thus:—

> "She called him lord and liege,
> Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,
> Her god, her Merlin, the one passionate love
> Of her whole life; and ever overhead
> Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten branch
> Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain
> Above them; and in change of glare and gloom
> Her eyes and neck glittering went and came;
> Till now the storm, its burst of passion spent,
> Moaning and calling out of other lands,
> Had left the ravaged woodland yet once more
> To peace; and what should not have been had been,
> For Merlin, overtalked and overworn,
> Had yielded, told her all the charm, and slept.
> Then, in one moment, she put forth the charm
> Of woven paces and of waving hands,
> And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,
> And lost to life and use and name and fame."

I cannot help thinking that the historical Merlin was a far higher personality than this representation embodies. The enchanter and bard of the sixth century was no commonplace Solomon to fall before vulgar temptation. The conception of him as the typical man of his epoch—a man torn and distracted by doubts regarding the old Druidic faith, and yet not quite able to embrace the new creed of Columba and Kentigern, fondly turning to the hills for solace—is more true historically, and it is a far finer conception than anything either in Malory or Tennyson.

The simple tradition of Tweedside regarding the fate of the seer, is that he lies with Arthur and his knights in the enchanted halls under the purple Eildons, in a sleep that shall never be broken until the mythic sword be drawn and the mysterious bugle sounded. Perhaps

> "They have to sleep until the time is ripe
> For greater deeds to match their greater thought."

Leyden, in his too little-known poem, *The Scenes of Infancy*, has finely touched this old belief and expectation of the Cymri, which originated apparently with the poet-seer, the woodland Merlin :—

> "Wild on the breeze the thrilling lyre shall fling
> Melodious accents from each elfin string.
> Such strains the harp of haunted Merlin threw
> When from his dreams the mountain-sprites withdrew ;
> While, trembling to the wires that warbled shrill,
> His apple-blossoms waved along the hill.
> Hark ! how the mountain echoes still retain
> The memory of the prophet's boding strain !
> Once more begirt with many a martial peer,
> Victorious Arthur shall his standard rear,
> In ancient pomp his mailed bands display ;
> While nations wondering mark their strange array,
> Their proud commanding port, their giant form,
> The spirit's stride, that treads the northern storm.
> Where fate invites them to the dread repast,
> Dark Cheviot's eagles swarm on every blast."*

* Leyden, *Scenes of Infancy*, pp. 300-1.

Of the prophecies attributed to Merlin, one, at least, may be regarded as having a certain and never-failing fulfilment. Speaking of the wild scenery amid which his later days were passed, "Lady," said the Bard, "the flesh upon me shall be rotten before a month shall have passed; but my spirit will not be wanting to all those who shall come here." *

Whatever we may think of this solution of these early days, the problem dimly felt then is even now a pressing one for us. We must now still ask how we are to reconcile or to interpret harmoniously the impressions of nature, the scientific sense of what it presents to us, the imaginative sense of what it suggests to us, its literal and its symbolical aspects, with the supersensible personality which every normal human heart must feel somehow pervades it. How are we to conciliate natural feeling with supernatural emotion? was the question of the reflective nature-worshipper among the Druids. It is not less the question for every reflective man in this nineteenth century; and I am afraid we are not much advanced beyond the sun-worshippers of a thousand years ago on the Tweeddale hills.

* *Prophecies de Merlin*, F. 76.

VI.

CUMBRIA AND SCOTLAND UNDER DAVID I. AS PRINCE AND KING, AND DOWN TO THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER III., IN 1285-6.

FROM the seventh to the eleventh centuries, there is much obscurity over the course of history in Scotland. When the light begins to dawn in the eleventh century, and brighten in the twelfth, the features of the country are very different from the original Cymric and Pictish period. In the north of the Forth there is evidence that a fusion has taken place between Scot and Pict—the former gaining supremacy, and giving the name Scotia or Scotland first to that part of the country, and then to the whole land.

To the south of the Forth, or Scots' Water, in what is now known as the Lowlands, there are signs that the Angles of Bernicia—including mainly Berwick and East Lothian—have become the dominant race in population and in language. The Cymri of Strathclyde have still a distinct appellation as Cumbrenses, and the Picts, or probably mixed Gaels of Galloway are known as Galwenses, but they are being fast merged in the Angle population, which is spread-

ing over the entire Lowlands. While the western Gael or Scot had apparently gained the civil supremacy of the country, the Border Angle was really the moulding and civilising element. He was spreading his customs, his laws, and his language over conquering Scot, and subject Pict, and the now loyal Cymri of the Tweed and the Clyde.

From the time of Malcolm Canmore, there had been an immigration from England of Angles and Saxons into Scotland, especially into the valley of the Tweed, and the Lowlands generally. These strengthened the powerful Angle element already existing in Bernicia. They were attracted to the representative of the Saxon monarchy; they felt the pressure of the forest and feudal laws; and they brought with them the Angle speech of northern England. True to the Saxon instinct of individual liberty, they sought in the north, under the kindlier rule of Canmore and the Saxon Princess Margaret, the freedom they could not have in the south. The sons of Malcolm and Margaret, particularly the youngest, David I., favoured their coming. The spirit thus engendered against Norman rule and the feudal usages of England, lived in the breasts of the descendants of those immigrants. And this it was which, transmitted and strengthened by tradition, gave intensity to the hatred of the Lowlander against Edward I., and ultimately drove his son into that ignominious flight from Bannockburn to Dunbar. Edward had no doubt what some may regard as enlightened views of government. They were, however, of

a somewhat imperial and arbitrary sort, and the enlightened element in views, pressed upon a people at the point of the sword, is apt not to be greatly appreciated. The spirit of the War of Independence was an Anglo-Saxon hatred of the feudal Norman of the south. It was manifested especially in the Lowlands of Scotland. It met with no sympathy, rather opposition, from the Gael of the Highlands, who had far more affinity of feeling with what it confronted than with what it sought, and who was indifferent as to what king reigned south of his mountains. Yet it was this spirit which fused the mixed elements of population on the Lowland plains and hills during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries into one nationality. It is that which has given the Lowland Scot his character of stern individuality, self-reliance, and stubborn independence, qualities which have done excellent service, but which sometimes with him assume so pronounced a form of self-assertion, when no one is questioning his dignity or importance, as to be slightly disagreeable. It is the well-spring, too, of that deep and full current of popular ballad and song, reflecting national feeling and personal prowess which, passing on through the centuries to our times, has risen and increased, until it has found its widest sweep in the lyrics of Burns, and in the prose and poetry of Scott. Our first great national epic was *The Bruce* of Barbour, our greatest national lyric is *Scots Wha Hae*, our last and greatest national epic is *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

Besides the influx of the common people of the south, there was also from the time of Malcolm Canmore a pretty constant immigration of good Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman families from Northumbria and other parts of England. These settled at first in the Lowlands, and many of them afterwards passed into the central and northern parts of the kingdom. This immigration was especially encouraged by David I., who no doubt looked on it as a means of civilization, and of promoting the influence of the Church, to which he was so strongly attached. At the Battle of the Standard, under David, in 1138, we have, besides the Britons of Strathclyde, who formed the second division of the army, the Galwenses, or men of Galloway, who were in the front place. These were "usually termed Picts, but they were a Gaelic people. The third division consisted of Laodonenses, or Angles of Lothian, with the Insulani and Lavernani, or people of the Isles and Lennox. The King had in his own division the Scoti, or people of the districts extending from the Forth to the Spey, the Muravenses, the newly conquered Gaelic people of Moray, and a body of 'milites Angli et Franci,' or Anglic and Norman knights, who formed his own body-guard." *

We find these national distinctions preserved considerably later than the time of David. In the reign of his successor, Malcolm IV. (1153-1165), we have the King of the Scots addressing the people of the land as—"Francis, Anglicis,

* *Historians of Scotland*, IV., Fordun's *Chron.*, Int., pp. lii., liii.

Scotis, et Galweiensibus."* And again the same King addresses them as—"Francis et Anglicis, Scotis, Walensibus, Gauelensibus." † Among the witnesses to these documents are the leading men of the period—Somerville, Umphraville, Morville, Lindsay, Riedale (Riddel), Soulis, Avenel, Cumin, Colville. Odin, the son of Eilaf, and his son John, appear almost like stray Norsemen among the Anglo-Normans. Possibly Ormiston on the Tweed, now Glenormiston, was his *toun* for some generations.

It was out of a fusion of the races indicated by those designations that what now bears the name of the Scottish nation arose. It was especially to those "Milites Angli et Franci" that David gave estates on Tweedside. These Angles, Normans, and, we may add, Flemings, soon held, under feudal investiture, from David and the succeeding kings of his line, nearly all the lands along the Tweed and its tributaries. Each settler fixed the limits of his *vil* or *toun*, "built himself a house of fence, distributed the lands of his manor among his own few followers, and the *nativi* whom he found attached to the soil, either to be cultivated on his own account, or at a fixed 'ferm' on the risk of the tenant." ‡ Beside the *toun* each built a mill and a brew-house. This accounts for the innumerable and utterly superfluous mills to be found till lately in the heathery glens of the Lowlands.

* *Reg. Epis. Glasg.*, I., No. 12., temp. Malcolm IV. *De Ecclesia de Veteri Rokesburgh.*

† *Ibid.*, No. 12.

‡ Innes, *Early Scottish History*, p. 10.

The kings of the Anglo-Saxon race of Malcolm Canmore thus attached to themselves by a close tie the barons and landowners of the country. The old Cymric stock in the south, and in a measure the Gaelic race in the north, were superseded as lairds or *domini* by men more intimately allied in feeling, sympathy, and blood with the reigning house.

The public document which throws most light on the principality of Cumbria at this period, and on the fusion of races which was going on in the Lowlands, is the memoir or *notitia*, which records an investigation, directed by David while Earl of Cumbria, regarding the lands and churches belonging to the Episcopal See of Glasgow. It is entitled, "Inquisicio per David Principem Cumbrensem de terris Ecclesie Glasguensi pertinentibus facta."* Its supposed date is about 1116. David succeeded to the throne in 1124. John, the tutor of David, became the first bishop of Glasgow under the new ecclesiastical system in 1115. As the deed refers to him as bishop, the inquisition must have taken place between 1115 and 1124. The first part of the deed contains a statement made by its framers, in presence of the Prince and his Court, of the tradition and belief of the country at the time regarding the history and possessions of the Cathedral Church. It is said that Kentigern settled a colony of converts in Glasgow in the middle of the sixth century. The five *juratores*—"seniores homines et sapientiores totius

* See *Registrum Episcopatus Glasguensis*, I., No. I.

Cumbriae"—"the older and wiser men of Cumbria"—then record on oath their belief regarding the possessions of the Church. Cumbria itself is described as a region situated between England and Scotland, "regione quadam inter Angliam et Scotiam sita." Part of the original kingdom had already been given up to England, viz., that south of the Solway to the Derwent, including Carlisle. The remainder or Scottish portion had become the Bishopric or Parochia of Glasgow. The Inquisition recalls the foundation of Glasgow, the pontifical seat or See of Cumbria, by the "domestici fidei" and the "proceres regni," co-operating with the King of the province, "cum rege provincie." This refers to the time of Kentigern and Rydderch Hael. The Church and religion flourished for some time under the many successors of Kentigern. At length, however, a fraudulent exterminator (fraudulentus exterminator) arose, and by his craftiness wrought unbearable injuries (scandala intolerabilia) upon the Church of the Cumbrians. Diverse troubles arising, the whole district was laid waste, and the inhabitants sent into exile. A long time having elapsed after this, tribes of various nations flowing into it from different parts, occupied the deserted district. These people, differing in race, language, and mode of life, did not readily amalgamate, and were heathen rather than faithful worshippers (gentilitatem potius quam fidei cultum tenuere). Even now they are represented as living more like beasts than men. In order to restrain their excesses, and introduce among them some

sense of morality and civilization, and the knowledge of saving truth, God in his providence has sent David among them, the brother-german of Alexander the King of the Scots, as their prince and duke (principem et ducem). David again has appointed his tutor, John, a man devoted to God, to be their bishop. After his consecration, he has spread the preaching of the Word through the diocese (parochiam) of Cumbria. David, both in his capacity as Prince of the district, or at least of the part under the Scottish crown, makes the inquisition for the purpose of ascertaining accurately the ancient possessions of the Church, with a view to their restoration to the See. The oath of certain of the older and wiser men of the whole of Cumbria is taken, as to their knowledge and traditional belief on the point, and the result is a list declared by them of the lands and churches belonging of old to the pontifical Church of Glasgow.

The ejection of the Cymri referred to in the Inquisition was either not complete or not permanent. It is obvious that neither the oppressions of Æthelfrid, Osuiu, nor those of Angus MacFergus had destroyed the British nationality. In 875, we are told, in the Saxon Chronicle, that Halfden the Dane frequently harried the Picts and the Stratcludenses or Stratclud Wealas. And we see that down to David's time, and, as we shall find, even later, the inhabitants of Cumbria are recognised as a distinct nationality. Their laws were known as peculiar even down to the time

of Edward I., when we hear of the "Laws of the Bretts and the Scots."

Among other lands found in the inquisition to belong of old to the Church of Glasgow, are Stoboc, now Stobo, Penteiacob, otherwise Penjacob, now Eddlestone. In Pobles [Peebles] there belong to the Church "una carucata terre et ecclesia" —"a ploughgate of land and a church"—dedicated to St. Kentigern.* In Treverquyrd [Traquair] there belong a ploughgate of land and a church. These possessions were no doubt as old as the time of Kentigern. The names of the jurymen (juratores) are as follow:—Uchtred filius Waldef, Gillielmus filius Boed, Leysing et Oggo, Cumbrenses judices, Halden filius Eadulf. These are obviously natives of the province, and they are Angle or Saxon, at least Teutonic. Have we any traces of them in the middle ages or now? Boed may possibly be Boyd or Bold. Halden remains on Tweedside still, and may be traced back in the Burgh Records of Peebles all through the middle ages until our own time. Eadulf is to be traced in Eadulfstoun, now Eddlestone. The others have passed quite traceless away. They are simply dim figures in the early dawn of Scottish story—men who could remember through their fathers the early Cymric and Saxon traditions of their country.

Curiously enough, while the jurymen are wholly Angle, the witnesses to the oath are partly Angle or Saxon, and

* Compare also Innes, *Early Scottish History*, p. 6.

partly Norman, the latter predominating. We have three Cospatricks, probably of Dunbar. Cospatrick has been regarded as originally meaning servant of Patrick. But the family was now to all purposes a feudal family, holding their lands in Scotland by the new tenure, and found almost always on the side of lordly aggression and domination. We have Osolf filius Eadwin. There is Maccus filius Undweyn. This was subsequently Maxwell, the ancestor of the great lords Maxwell. The family held originally a small feudal barony on the Tweed. Then there is Uchtred filius Scot, perhaps the earliest mention of what afterwards became the famous Border surname. Then comes Ulchel filius Alstan. Hugo de Morvilla next occurs, and seems to head the list of Normans. He succeeded his father in the office of High Constable of Scotland in 1159. He was Lord of Lauderdale and the father of Richard Morville, who possessed, though only in "ferme," from the Bishop of Glasgow, Gilmoreston, now Eddlestone. Then there are Paganus de Brausa, or of Braiose, and Osbert de Ardena. Gervasius Ridel also appears. For long afterwards Riddel was a great landed name in Teviotdale, on the banks of the Ale Water, where it flows by soft pastoral haughs, far down from its wild source amid the solitary lochs of Alemoor. Then follow Guido de Caynes and Berengarius Engaine. Robertus Corbet, the next witness, held the lands of Manor Water. Walterus de Lindeseya was a far back ancestor of the "lightsome Lindsays," and his lordship at

this time lay high up in the wilds of Clydesdale. Robertus de Burnevilla is supposed to be the laird of what was afterwards known as Brunetland, near Broughton, which the old family of the Burnets held for several generations, along with their later and principal property, the estate of Barns. Some years later, as witness to the great charter of Holyrood, by David I., is Rodbertus de Burneuile.* Reinaldus de Muscans, Walterus filius Winemari follow. Willelmus Venator, the next name, was probably an ancestor of the storied line of Hunter of Polmood. Alanus de Perci needs no comment. The last is Walter de Broy. In a subsequent deed, before 1124, besides Corbet, Lindeseia, de Morevilla, Robertus de Brus, occurs Hugo Breton—either a man from Brittany, or a solitary example of the original people of Strathclyde.†

David gives a charter to Durham of Coldingham and lands in Lothian, "with sac, and soc, and toll and team, and infangethef," in 1126, in the second year of his reign, at Peebles (apud Pebles), that is, at the Royal Castle there, long one of the seats of the government of the kingdom. The witnesses are John the Bishop, Robert de Brus, Herebert the Chancellor, Ascelin the Archdeacon, Pagan of Braiose, Hugh Brito, Berengar Ingane, Gospatric the Sheriff, Aimar.‡ These are obviously all, or nearly all Normans.

* *National Manuscripts of Scotland*, I., XVI.

† *Reg. Epis. Glasg.*, I., p. 8, No. II.

‡ *Nat. MSS. of Scotland*, I., XV.

The document, embodying the gift by David of the tenth of his Chan or Kane of Kyle and Carrick to the Church of Glasgow, is addressed to the barons, ministers, and all the faithful of his whole kingdom, "tam Gawensibus, quam Anglicis et Scotis." And among the witnesses there are obviously representatives of the different races—Willelmus Cumin the Chancellor, Hugo de Morevilla, Fergus de Galweia, Hugo Briton, Alwinus MacArchil, etc.*

The great Charter of Melrose, by David I.,† must have been given after 1143, for reference is made to the king and his son Henry having personally gone over the boundaries of certain of the gifted lands "the second year after Stephen, King of England, was taken." Stephen was taken prisoner in the battle of Lincoln, by the troops of Matilda, in 1141. It is very important to note, regarding this grant, that while the usual Anglo-Norman names are there as witnesses—viz., Morville, Somerville, Lindsay, De Arden, Umfraville—we have a special set of witnesses who are described as "the men from that land." The lands referred to are those of Melrose, Eildon, Darnwick, Gattonside, Selkirk, and Traquair, and the names of the men are almost wholly Saxon. We have "Gospatrick the Earl, Ulfchill son of Ethestan, Osolf son of Huctred, Maccus son of Undwain, Huctred son of Sioth, Huctred son of Gospatric, Orm son of Eilaf, Eilaf son of Gospatric, Eduf son of Norman, Osolf son of Edive, Osolf son of Elfstan, Robert Brus Meschin, Radulph

* *Reg. Epis. Glasg.*, No. IX. † *Nat. MSS.*, I., XVII.

son of Turstain, Roger nephew of the Bishop. At Ercheldon in June." With only one or two exceptions, these are Saxon names.

Willelmus de Sumerville, appears as a witness to the confirmation of land to the Church of St. John of the Castle of Rokesburgh. The date is somewhere before 1142, and it is given "apud Trauequair."* This was the ancestor of the line of "lordly Somerville," already apparently holding lands on the Tweed. He died in 1142. De Vesci, De Unframvilla, De Graham, Thor filius Sweyn, Baldewinus the Fleming occur in the deed *De Ecclesia de Lohworuora* about 1150.† Ranulfus de Sules appears in the same document, but the scribe has scored out the name. He died before 1170. The nephew of this de Sules, also Ranulfus, succeeded him. His fate is the burden of popular tradition. "In the year 1207," says the Chronicle of Melrose, "Ranulfus de Sules was slain in his own house by his own domestics." It was this violent death which probably gave rise to the legend that the great and terrible lord of Hermitage was sodden in the cauldron on the Nine-stane Rig.

We have thus, even before the death of David I. in 1153, the most of the names which were afterwards either distinguished or illustrious in the history of Scotland. New names, evidently of Norman origin, crop up in the succeeding reigns down to the death of Alexander III. But we have evidence, at the same time, of a large substratum of Teutonic

* *Reg. Epis. Glasg.*, I., 10, No. V. † *Ibid*, No. XI.

population, chiefly Angle, but partly Scandinavian, in the valley of the Tweed and its tributaries. The descendants of this class form the main body of the population of the Lowlands at the present day. About the year 1200, forty-seven years after the death of David, and while William the Lion was king, we have a very curious and interesting document, which has preserved both the names of places and of persons at that period in the valley of the Tweed, the central part of the old province of Cumbria. This is the *Divise de Stobbo*, or *The Marches of Stobbo*, preserved for us in the Chartulary of the Bishopric of Glasgow.* Stobo was at this time the property of the Bishopric, and it was necessary to settle the marches. I translate it as follows:—"These are the right marches between Stobbo and Hopprewe and Orde. From the end of the burn of Polternam where it falls into the Tweed, up to the head of the same burn; and from its head as the ridge (cilium, eye-lid) of the hill bears through between Glenmanthav and Glenmerlahv, continuously in Whiteshopes Fuirless, and thence through the ridge (eye-lid) of the hill on to Ordeshope; and from Ordeshope through the ridge (eye-lid) of the hill on to the head of Poltenstobbeh, and from the head of Poltenstobbo through the ridge of the hill on to Glemubfuirles, and so through the ridge of the hill between Glemubfuirless on to the burn of Glenkeht, and so descending as that burn falls into Biggar [Water]."

* *Reg. Epis. Glasg.*, I., 89, No. 104.

Stobo, Happrew, and the Urd in Ladyurd and Lochurd, represent certain of the names. The fine flowing name, Polternam, is unfortunately lost, though we can point to the stream it indicated. The pure Saxon Glenmanthav and Glenmerlahv have also unluckily perished. Still, with this deed in his hand, any one may now trace the boundaries of the ancient estate of Stobo, and the contiguous limits of Happrew and Orde.

But the main interest of the document attaches to the names of the witnesses, to the nationality indicated by them, and to their places of residence. They are as follows:—"Dominus Adam filius Gilberti; Dominus Milo corneht; Dominus Adam filius Edolfi; Johannes Ker Venator aput Swhynhope; Gillemihhel queschutbrit aput tefquer; Patricius de hopekeliov; Mihhyn brunberd aput corrukes; Mihhyn filius Edred aput Stobbo; Cristinus heremita de Kyngeldores; Cospatricus heremita de Kylbeuhoc; Padinus filius kercau aput corrukes; Gillemur filius kercau aput corrokes; Christinus gennan serviens aput tefquer; Gylcolmus faber aput pebbles; Gylmihhel filius Bridoc aput Kyngeldures; Gylis filius Buht aput drumedler; Gillechristus filius Danielis aput glenwhym; Mathheus, Jacobus, et Johannes, filii Cosmungho sacredotis aput Edoluestone; Cospatricius romefare; Randulfus de Meggete; Adam de seles clericus; Gillechristus filius huttyng aput currokes; Gilbertus persona de Kylbeuhhoc; Gylmor hund apud Dauwic; Mihhyn senescallus de Dauwic; Dudyn de

Brouhtune; Patricius filius Caswale aput Stobbo; Adam et Cosouold filii Muryn aput Castrum Oliveri."

The names of persons we cannot well trace for want of surnames, which were not common in Scotland until a later period. But there is, obviously, a great preponderance of Saxon names among the witnesses. Johannes Ker, the hunter, is probably British, the name of a native, from *caer*, a fort. In the Soonhope, or Swinehope, where he lived, is Caersman, the place of the fort. John's fort was probably there. Kercau is also apparently Cymric. Edolf is preserved in Edolfston, or Eddlestone. He is probably the very Edulphus, son of Utrid, to whom Richard de Morville, High Constable of Scotland, gave, before 1189, in fee for a knight's service, Gillemorestun, of old Peniacob—a property which Morville merely rented from the Bishop of Glasgow.* Cosmungho, the priest at Edulfston, suggests memories of St. Mungo. It may be noted, too, that the priest of Edulfston was the father of three sons, whose position and status were publicly recognised. Though David had worked energetically at establishing the law of priestly celibacy, the practice of clerical marriage seems not to have died without a struggle. We have another proof of this about the same date. Between 1180 and 1203 Osbert, the abbot, and the convent of Kelso, receive David the son of Peter, Dean of Stobhou, as his heir (in heredem egus recepimus), and concede to

* *Reg. Epis. Glasg.*, I., No. 45.

him the land of Corroc, which his father held from the abbey.*

Adam and Cosouold, the sons of Muryn at Oliver Castle, might be Frisels, afterwards Frasers. They had Oliver at a very early period. But, in fact, Elifer occurs in connection with the Tweed during the period of Cymric history. The heremites at Kingledoors and Kilbucho suggest a well-known development of the ecclesiastical system of St. Columba, in virtue of which certain of the brotherhood retired to sequestered places for meditation and prayer. We have Beccan the *solitarius* in 634. The life of the hermit was highly esteemed in the early Scottish Church.†

Queschutbrit is a puzzle. Is the affix Briton? Brunberd is probably Brown-beard. Gennan is a puzzle. Cospatricius romefare. What is this? Is he one who had distinguished himself by visiting Rome? Or was he an accredited messenger between the district and Rome? Gilmor hund apud Dauwic, is also puzzling. Would he be hund-meister? Mihhyn senescallus de Dauwic is, of course, the Steward. With regard to the places of residence of the witnesses, the case is different. These were chiefly estates, and most of the names have come down by record and tradition to our own time. Corneht we do not know. Swhynhope is now Soonhope. Trauefquer is now Traquair. Hopekeliov is Hop-Kailzie, and now Kailzie. Corrukes, Corrokes,

* *Liber de Calchou*, C. 112.

† Compare *Historians of Scotland*, V, p. cxxiv.

is probably The Crook, though it then indicated a large property stretching north-westwards from near what is now the Crook across Clydesdale. There remains to the present day, with little change, the following:—Stobbo (Stobo), Kyngeldores (Kingledoors), Kylbeuhoc (Kilbucho), Pebbles (Peebles), Drumedler (Drummelzier), Glenwhym (Glenholm), Edoluestone (Eddlestone), Meggete (Meggat), Dauwic (Dawyck), Brouhtune (Broughton), Castrum Oliveri (Oliver Castle). This deed helps us to settle the etymology of Drummelzier, as Drum Medler, or ridge of Medler or Meldred.

It was thus there arose, as lairds or *domini*, holding of the crown for military service, the families that ruled on Tweedside down to the time of the War of Independence. Some of them kept their lands through this troubled period, and even under the Bruces and the Stewarts. Some, again, passed northward, and founded several of the great northern families, as the Gordons and the Frasers. As possessors of land in the valley of the Tweed, or in the glens of its tributaries, we have, partly before the War of Independence and partly after its close, charter records of Avenel, Baddeby, Balliol, Burnet, Bosville, Cockburn, Corbet, Comyn, Despencer, Douglas, Dunbar, Fleming, Friselle or Fraser of Oliver, Gordon, Home, Haye, Haig, Hunter, Haliburton, Horsbroc, Hastings, Inglis, Ker, Lindsay, Lockard, Melville, Morville, Maxwell, Moaut (Mowat), Moray or De Moravia, Napier, Purveys, Riddell, Somerville, Soulis, St. Clair, Vache

(Veitch), Vesci, and a few others. These families and their descendants housed themselves in the now mouldering peel towers of the glens and hills, often beneath the shadow of the hill, crowned with remains of earthen raths and circular ramparts, within which the Britons of Strathclyde, now an almost effaced race, had defied winter storm and wild beast and wilder human foe for many centuries before.

Cospatric of Dunbar, who emerged out of the dim Northumbrian history, Fraser, lord of Oliver, Soulis, lord of Hermitage, and Lindsay, lord chiefly in Upper Clydesdale, were the most powerful men of the Lowlands at the period of the War of Independence. The Douglases rose on the fall or disappearance of Dunbar and Soulis. Scott, now so powerful in the Border counties, was as yet insignificant—a petty yoeman in a small tributary burn, not even a *dominus*, or laird proper. Buccleuch arose into prominence, in the sixteenth century, through the fall of the Douglases, especially after the fight at Arkinholm, and through the execution of Armstrong of Gilnockie, and the murder of Murray of Newark and Ettrick Forest. After the death of James IV., when the central government was weak, Scott managed gradually, though warded once at least for his aggressions, to get permanent possession of Ettrick Forest, the dower lands of Margaret, the widowed Queen. The Kers, or Cars, though of the native stock of the district, accommodated themselves to the feudal vassalage; and they come into prominence alongside of the

Scotts, though usually as deadly foes. The lord of Home Castle, on the south slopes of the Lammermoors, and overlooking the Merse, was, after the Douglases, the greatest power in the Borders during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, down, indeed, to the Union of the Crowns.

A military vassalage was thus being constituted in the kingdom by David as his hope and defence against the barbarism and ill-assorted individualism of the time. No doubt this institution was an element of strength in the circumstances in which he was placed. But he could not be expected to foresee the limited and selfish nature of the interest he was founding in the country, and the power he was raising up against the prerogatives of the crown which he wore, and the influence of which he sought to consolidate and perpetuate. For no history shows more forcibly than that of the reigns of the Stewarts the counterpoising power of a feudal aristocracy alike to the legitimate influence of the people and the crown. Lauder Bridge, Sauchieburn, and Solway Moss show how the Scottish Kings were obliged to bow their heads, sometimes in the utter agony of broken-hearted men, before the domination of the powerful feudal lords, whom the royal fiat had created.

This feudal aristocracy, moreover, was destined, some centuries afterwards, to play a part in an ecclesiastical revolution, which the pious David would have regarded as utter sacrilege. When the Church and those

monasteries which he did so much to introduce into the country and to foster, were tottering to their fall at the Reformation, it was this landed class who controlled the policy of the time through their self-constituted Parliament, and under the convenient pretext of the process of Commendation, managed effectually to appropriate to themselves and their families the lands which the piety or the fears of five centuries had set apart for national and religious purposes.

While a military vassalage was thus rapidly forming, there was the growth of another social influence which was destined to become almost as strong as that of the feudal aristocracy. It has proved, at least, to be that power in the country which has coped with it on nearly equal terms. This was the rise of burghal and municipal corporations. Towns, or aggregations of inhabitants, were constituted into burghs, with burghal privileges. The process went on rapidly in the reign of David; still more so, perhaps, in the reigns of his grandsons and successors, Malcolm (1153-1165) and William the Lion (1165-1214). The most of those burghs, especially along the Tweed from Jedburgh to Peebles, were walled towns. The burghs had privileges of trade and of commerce. They possessed common lands, out of which has arisen, through intrigue and violence on the one side, and degrading subserviency and treachery on the other, many a goodly estate, on which its first possessor probably plumed himself as greatly as if it had been the reward of patriotic

virtue. The burgesses had obligations of defence, of manning the wall, of military service. The "jowing" of the town bell would bring at any moment of the day or night, in each of those Border burghs, to the Cross 500 men at arms. These were bound together, not by a tie of feudal vassalage, but by a sense of common interest in the defence of "the gude toun," of their goods and gear, and by a patriotic feeling for the central authority of the kingdom. There thus arose trained soldiers, owing no feudal obligations, looking to the monarch alone as their liege-lord. The noble part which the burghers of Selkirk and Hawick played at Flodden show how brave and staunch to their country and their king could be those workers in the peaceful pursuits of industry, notwithstanding the social contempt with which they were treated by an assumptive, arrogant, and illiterate aristocracy. And, on the other hand, they were not unfrequently destined to turn the tide of a hard-fought fight, when the sovereign had so far forgotten his relations to the nation he ruled, or was so driven by circumstances as to side with a feudal faction against the people. The crucial fight of Langside, where the blanket-banner of the guilds of Glasgow was more than a match for all the chivalry of the Hamiltons, with the unfortunate Mary at its head, is perhaps the most emphatic illustration of the power of the burghal element in Scottish history. The last of the Stewarts went down before it, and all that was left her of her kingdom and her patrimony was a night in

Dundrennan Abbey, and the cruel mercies of the calculating Elizabeth.

Those burghal corporations were the centres of self-government, the needed lesson of the times. They were the citadels of popular liberty. They cherished the sense of freedom, when feudal lords were only oppressive. Out of them, while the crown and feudal vassalage were at strife, each seeking but its own interest, grew the spirit of Scottish nationality which we now know and feel. Their modern representatives, unfortunately, have frequently little either of decency or dignity; but all the same they are symbols of a grand past, and of a great growth whose expansion has been a national blessing.

"In a country," says Mr. Cosmo Innes, "so distant, so naturally poor, more impoverished by misgovernment and internal discord, and the meddling of a powerful and grasping neighbour, we must not look for the extended dealings that dignify trade, nor for the refinement, luxury, art, which adorned the free cities of the Continent. Instead of these we may find something even more valuable, if we are able to trace to our free institutions, and to the burgh life that glowed from them, a sturdy independence and self-reliance, honest frugality, a respect for law and order, and an intelligent love of education, somewhat above our neighbours, which, I hope, still mark our nation.

"In the early literature of Scotland, we have a worthy reflection of her history. Her first poet sung the achieve-

ments of Bruce. Her greatest satirist aimed his shafts at the corruptions of Rome. In the homely burghs of Scotland we may find the first spring of that public spirit, the voice of the people, which in the worst of times, when the crown and the law were powerless, and the feudal aristocracy altogether selfish in its views, supported the patriot leaders Wallace and Bruce in their desperate struggle, and sent down that tide of native feeling which animated Burns and Scott, and which is not yet dead, however much it may be endangered by the childish follies of its quixotic champions. Whatever of thought, of enterprise, of public feeling, appears in our poor history, took rise in our burghs, and among our burgess class." *

It was, further, in the time of David, as Earl and King, that Scotland first became formally incorporated with the great ecclesiastical system of Europe. The great religious houses, the abbeys and monasteries in the lower reaches of the Tweed—Kelso, Jedburgh, and Melrose—arose for the first time, or they were reconstituted with a munificence and splendour unknown before. Dryburgh was founded a little later by Hugh de Morville, Lord of Lauderdale, and High Constable of Scotland, who succeeded his father in 1159, and died in 1162. Some hold that Moreville was implicated in the murder of Thomas à Becket. If so, the founding and rich endowment of Dryburgh was probably an expiation for

* Innes, *Ancient Laws and Customs of the Burghs of Scotland*, Pref., p. xliv.

this early deed of his life. The very ruins of these houses now strike us with awe, admiration, and wonder. We can trace how they grew from the conception of the early Norman and Saxon arched structure, the type of simplicity, mass, and strength, until, with this as a basis, they effloresced at a later period in the ornate yet chastened Gothic. As we doat over the picturesque beauty of the broken details which are left to us, and try to conjure up the great unity which in each case they constituted, we cannot but feel that in those otherwise dim and barbarous early centuries, there was a sense of vastness and of regal magnificence in art which has not since then flourished as a genuine growth in our land, and that the power of imagination which could so embody itself was inspired by a deep and faithful state of the human soul, interpenetrated by the emotions of awe and grandeur, and purified by reverence and the sense of an encompassing invisible reality.

The Abbey, which was to become known as that of Kelso, and over which, shortly after its foundation, a spiritual peer presided as mitred abbot, was first set down by Earl David (1118-1124) near his castle in the forest of Selkirk—"my waste" of Selkirk—the name he applied to the now sweet pastoral valleys of the Ettrick and the Yarrow. He filled it with Tironensian monks. The monks did not like the situation, or policy suggested the transference of their seat to the lower and richer part of the valley, near the ancient and royal Castle of Roxburgh, and where the Teviot, now

amid a scene of soft woodland beauty, mixes its waters with the Tweed. The town, now known as Kelso, then bore the name of Calchou; it had been known as Calchvynyd in the Cymric times, and had long been an attractive place of residence. There, somewhere between 1147 and 1152, David, as King, fixed finally the seat of the Tironensian monks; and the community grew to be one of the largest and richest in the kingdom. They held and cultivated numerous lands. They had under them, as was usual, various classes of rentallers—cottars *(cottarii)*, small cultivators, and husbandmen *(husbandi)*, who occupied a husband land, or somewhat larger acreage than the cottar. The origin of the word cottar, *cote* or *mud dwelling*, shows the humbleness of the position, at least at first. The husband land seems to have comprised two oxgangs, and each oxgang about thirteen acres. The carucate or ploughgate, so often spoken of, extended to twelve oxgangs. The Scotch plough of the day required twelve oxen.* The Abbey had also its granges or farm-houses, where a lay brother lived, and to which were attached *nativi*, *serfs*, or *churls*, in a word, slaves. Early in the thirteenth century, Earl Waldev of Dunbar gives over "Halden and his brother William and all their children and all their descendants" to Kelso.† Entries of this sort are but too common. In the reign of Alexander II. (1214-1249), we find that one Turkil Hog, his sons and daughters, were sold for three

* Innes, *Liber de Calchou*, Int., p. 37. † *Liber de Calchou*, c. 128.

marks of silver by Bertram of Lesser Riston to the Prior and Convent of Coldingham. And there are other sales of the same nature by the lords of Prendergest to Coldingham.* About 1280, Bernardus Fraser, along with a carucate of land in West Gordon, gave to the Abbey Adam, the son of Henry del Hoga, another unfortunate Hog—"nativo meo cum tota sequela sua."† This may be fairly translated —"my serf, along with his whole bag and baggage," which, doubtless, grouped together worldly effects and children, even remoter descendants, and showed a very summary way of disposing of Adam, a serf, yet a man. Poor Adam, who may be credited with a human soul, may have had some stirrings in his heart of revolt and repulsion, which were quite too deep for the appreciation of even Bernard Fraser, his lord and master. Slavery and servitude to the abbeys were gradually extinguished, chiefly through commutation in money, and perhaps the growth of a sense of the absolute worth of manhood and the sacredness of human personality.

The Abbey of Jedburgh, which is of the same date with that of Kelso, occupied a perilous position on the extremity of the Border-line. Its strong and massive tower, still nearly entire, though marked by blackening fire, shows that the white-stoled Premonstrentian monks there were men of arms as well as of letters; and, doubtless, they found the former most effective when the ruddy glare from "high Dunyon" told them of the Southron foe on the ridge of the Carter Fell.

* *National MSS.*, lviii., lix. † *Liber de Calchou*, c. 124.

The monastery of Melrose was of later date than Kelso and Jedburgh, as its more ornate architecture might lead us to expect. David had been king for twelve years ere, in 1136, he founded Melrose. This was exactly five hundred years after the foundation of the first monastery at Old Melrose, by Aidan, of Lindisfarne, and three hundred years after its destruction by Kenneth, King of the Scots. It was filled by Cistertian monks from Rievalle. David's structure at Melrose suffered, like the others in the district, so terribly during the War of Independence, that we must regard the existing remains as representing rather the structure raised on the second foundation of Robert the Bruce, within whose sacred walls his heart was to find its resting-place.

The Abbey of Melrose had, like Kelso, vast possessions. Besides what it owned in the Border counties, it had lands and privileges in Carrick and Kyle. Walter, the Steward, in the time of Alexander II. (1214-1249), in enlarging the grant of Forest on the banks of the Water of Ayr to the monks of Melrose, gives them all forest rights with the express exception "of hunting or taking falcons in the forest," because, as he says, that is neither becoming for their order, nor expedient for them. * This confirms the impression produced by the terms of other charters regarding the rights of fishing, that the monks had a decided taste for sport in field and river, and not unfrequently exercised it.

* *National MSS.*, I., liii.

These houses, whose ruins now touch us so deeply, were for four hundred years the centres to which the pious hearts of the district turned. The mysterious powers of the spiritual world were associated with them. There was grace for honest seekers, grace for the souls of departed kinsmen, and grace even when there was a touch of relenting on the part of the living for stricken foes. A divine inheritance could be purchased in each case by a gift of a portion of this passing world to the holders of the spiritual power; and hence the numerous donations to those houses and their princely landed possessions. This spirit of reverence for the church and abbey seems, however, to have been stronger from the time of David I. to the death of Alexander III., than subsequently to the War of Independence. It is possible that this war, and the family feuds and ferocities which lasted down to the time of James VI., rendered the Lowland nature fiercer, less reflective, and more callous than it originally was. At any rate, the Lowland Scot was not, during the middle ages, a very devoted churchman. Nor were the religious houses popular, or of high repute in the district. They were, no doubt, to some extent homes of art and of intellectual culture, but these are not elements which the average mind either understands or appreciates greatly. They are too far removed from what is called practical work. And it is remarkable that even in this aspect those rich and well-endowed Abbeys should show no name of note in letters during the whole four centuries of their monopoly and their power; though, without

doubt, they gave an early education to several men afterwards distinguished in mediæval learning, as Harvey, Bishop of Ely, and the astronomer, Joannes de Sacrobosco.

The history of the rise and the ruin of these splendid homes of piety is in each case the same. All of them suffered badly during the War of Independence—especially Kelso and Melrose, but rather in their possessions than in their edifices. Lords Surrey and Dacre, in 1523, burned and pillaged the most of them. It was reserved for Lord Hertford and his subordinates, Evers and Latoun, all of them fit agents of the most brutal of English kings, to complete, in 1544 and 1545, the work of destruction. A short record of the circumstances in which those stately edifices, usually regarded as sacred by all but the lowest in civilization, were broken down and destroyed, is of interest, as showing the spirit of the warfare at the time, and as serving to correct the popular but gross misconceptions regarding the authors of the devastation.

Henry VIII. was King of England. He was enraged that his scheme for the marriage of the infant Mary with his son Edward was finally rejected, in 1543, by the Governor Arran, and the French or national party in the country. He fumed and swore that he would drag the child out of the strongest castle in Scotland. She was meanwhile removed to a safe distance in the west. But an English fleet and army were despatched to ravage the country, especially the East Border. The summer of 1544 witnessed a frightful

desolation of that district, under Lord Hertford. The Scots found themselves unable to oppose the superior English force. "Seton, Home, and Buccleuch, hanging on the mountains of Lammermoor, saw with ineffectual regret the fertile plains of Merse and Lothian, and the Metropolis itself, reduced to a smoking desert." *

The abbey and palace of Holyrood are specially mentioned as having been burnt by Hertford, and the chief towns along the east coast.† The narrative of the fate of Dunbar gives an impressive idea of how these things were done, and of the tone of moral feeling of the actors. An account of "The Late Expedicion into Scotlande" was sent to the Lord Privy Seal of the time, by a friend of his with the army. He seems, indeed, to have been what in these days we should call a special reporter. On the 16th of May the English army encamped beside Dunbar. "That nyght," he tells us, "they looked for us to have burnt the towne of Dunbar, which we differred tyll the morning at the dislodgynge of our campe, which we executed by five hundred of our hackbutters, beyng backed with five hundred horsemen. And by reason we took them in the mornynge, who having wautched all night for our comynge, and perceyvynge our army to dislodge and depart, thoughte themselves safe of us, were newly gone to theyr beddes; and, in theyr fyrste slepes closed in with fyer, men, women, and children were suffo-

* *Minstrelsy*, Int., p. 123.

† *The Late Expedicion in Scotland*, printed in 1544. Dalzell's *Fragments*, p. 11.

cated and burnt."* "In these victories," says the pious reporter, "who is to be moste highest lauded but God?" † With such a spirit as this, could we expect that the abbey of Newbotle would be saved? or that the men inspired by it would be otherwise than gratified in burning and destroying "the Lord Seton's Castell, which was ryght fayre," and "his orchardes and gardens, whiche were the fayrest and beste in order that we sawe in al that country." ‡

Hertford had no sooner dispersed his army than there were found men emulous of his noble example. "The Lorde Eure (Evers), with many other valiant wise gentlemen abyding in the marches of the north parte, intendinge not by idelness to surcesse in occasions convenient," passed into Scotland by the Carter Fell, and set themselves down against Jedburgh. They took the town and sacked it, burnt the Abbey and the "Graye Freres." The spoil "layded at theyr departing five hundred horses." § Evers was followed by band after band in the course of the summer, until Teviotdale was wasted as it had never been before. There was "the contynance of Goddes favour towards us," writes this pious reporter, "and for this," he continues, "let us pray for the prosperous estate of our noble, good, and victorious Lorde Governour and King, for whose sake, doubtless, God hathe spred his blessing over us, in peace to have myrth, and in warres to have victorye." ‖

* Dalzell's *Fragments*, p. 10. † *Ibid*, p. 14. ‡ *Ibid*, p. 9.
§ *The Late Expedicion.* Dalzell's *Fragments.* ‖ *Ibid*, p. 11.

We have the catalogue of ruin of this summer duly set forth by its agents to the English King, of date 17th November, 1544.* On the list stands this entry:—"Towns, towers, barnekynes, paryshe churches, bastill houses, burned and destroyed, 192."

Evers and Latoun returned again to their work of destruction early in the spring of 1544-45. But now they did one thing which a Borderer and a Douglas could neither brook nor forgive. The Abbey of Melrose itself had been so defaced that there was little more to be done to it in the way of damage. There were, however, still within its walls the untouched tombs of the Douglases, especially his of Otterbourne and that of the Dark Knight of Liddesdale. With a meanness of heart and pitiful despite rare in the age of chivalry, they defaced the monuments which marked the resting-places of the heroic dead as they stood under the now roofless Abbey of Melrose. The representative of the ancient and "dreaded name" at this time was Archibald, the seventh Earl of Angus; and he was not unworthy of the house in its early and better days. The blood of Angus was fired by the outrage; and as Evers and Latoun were retreating from Melrose to Jedburgh, on the 27th of February, 1544-45, they were eagerly followed and watched by the Douglas with a thousand horsemen. Norman Lesley, at the head of a troop of Fifemen, was with him. Buccleuch rode down from Branxholm, he and the retainers of his name,

* See Note to the "Eve of St. John" in the *Minstrelsy*.

burning to revenge the devastations of his lands and towers in the waters of Teviot and Kale, of the preceding year. He insisted on fighting the marauding Southerns. The Scottish leaders manœuvred, drew the English from their march, and at Peniel Heugh, as the sun was going down, they wholly defeated and mercilessly slaughtered the mercenary band which had made the land a desert, and to which nothing had been sacred. Evers, his son Sir Ralph, and Latoun were among the slain. "The King of England," Scott tells us, "had promised to these two barons a feudal grant of the country which they had thus reduced to a desert; upon hearing which Angus is said to have sworn to write the deed of investiture upon their skins, with sharp pens and bloody ink."* He did the writing which his savage words implied; but there was no investiture—

"From Ala's banks to fair Melrose's fane,
How bright the sabre flashed o'er hills of slain,
(I see the combat through the mist of years),
When Scott and Douglas led the Border spears!
The mountain streams were bridg'd with English dead;
Dark Ancrum's heath was dyed with deeper red;
The ravag'd Abbey rung the funeral knell
When fierce Latoun and savage Evers fell;
Fair bloomed the laurel wreath by Douglas placed
Above the sacred tombs by war defaced.
Hail, dauntless chieftain! thine the mighty boast,
In scorn of Henry and his southern host,
To venge each ancient violated bust,
And consecrate to fame thy father's dust."†

* *Minstrelsy*—Note to "Eve of St. John." † Leyden, *Scenes of Infancy*.

Henry was, of course, still further enraged by this disaster. He sent Hertford himself to the Border early next year (1545) to revenge, if possible, the death of Evers and Latoun. The memory of Peniel Heugh, indeed, rankled in the mind of Englishmen until they had their revenge at Pinkie. Patten, in his account, openly tells us that this was one of the motives of the dreadful slaughter of that day,* when the fields from Musselburgh to the gates of Edinburgh, five miles of way, were strewn with the cloven Scottish dead, each lying face earthwards, under the merciless head-strokes of the pursuing and irresistible English horsemen.

Hertford was at Kelso on the 11th September, 1545. He took the Abbey there, and, not being able to fortify it, he resolved "to raze and deface the house of Kelso," which he did, and then to proceed to Melrose, Dryburgh, and Jedburgh with a similar purpose, which he carried out. There is something finely satisfactory, complete, and matter-of-fact in his statement of his purpose, and his reasons for it. He writes of the above date to the English King that he had resolved to raze and deface the house of Kelso, so as the "enemye shall have lytill commoditie of the same, and to remain encamped here for five or six days, and in the meanse seasone to devaste and burne all the country hereabouts as farr as we maye with our horsemen. As to-morrowe we intend to send a good bande of horsemen to Melrose and

* *The Expedicion into Scotlande*, p. 68, 1547. Printed in Dalzell's *Fragments*.

Dryburghe to burne the same, and all the cornes and villages in their waye, and so daylie to do some exploytes here in the Mershe, and at the end of the said 5 or 6 dayes to remove our campe, and to marche to Jedworthe to burne the same, and thus to marche through a great part of Tyvydale, to overthrow their piles and stone houses, and to burne their cornes and villages." * The sublime sense that this was the right thing to do, and the assured sense of His Majesty's acquiesence and delight in the completion of the business, are here indicated in a manner touchingly *naïve.*

These grand ruins are now very much as Hertford left them. And we should be spared for the future all ignorant talk about the Reformers and Cromwell having been the malefactors. They were saved the work, if they had had the will. It was done five years before the Reformation, and fifty-four years before Cromwell was born. Only one healing influence has been at work since those September days which first saw them reduced from the perfection of symmetry and beauty to blackened walls. Time has dealt softly and gently with the remains. It has dotted them with the growths that love ancient ruin, and over all it has thrown the tender pathos of decay.

Along with the great Abbeys of Kelso, Jedburgh, and Melrose, there grew up in the valley of the Tweed the royal

* *State Papers*, Vol. v., quoted by Innes. *Liber de Calchou*, Introduction, p. 48.

castles of Roxburgh, Traquair, and Peebles. These, especially Roxburgh, were the seats of royalty down to the death of Alexander III. Each was in the centre of forest lands. These were divided into several distinct forests, with separate names and management. The forests of Ettrick and Selkirk are referred to as different. The former embraced the valleys of the Upper Ettrick and the Yarrow; the latter included the lands on the Lower Ettrick, and for a considerable distance those along the adjoining banks of the Tweed. To the north-west lay the forest of Traquair, and on the north-east that of Gala. There was another and smaller forest on the Upper Alne, now the Ale Water.* The old idea that a forest implied wood is, of course, exploded; but it is certainly a mistake to suppose, as we find done in these days, that the forest lands of the Lowlands were not originally, and for a long period, well-wooded demesnes. There is quite cogent historical proof of this, apart from the geological evidence. We know that so late as 1649, reference is made to the fact that Etterick Forest was greatly denuded of trees, while some were allowed to remain. And now, were the sheep taken off that Lowland country, we should find that in a very short time hill and glen would be clothed with birch, hazel, rowan, all indigenous to the soil.

The Castle of Roxburgh was the most ancient, as it was the largest and most important of those seats of monarchy

* Compare the references in Chalmers' *Caledonia*, I., Book IV., C. 6.

and government. It had been a great fortress in the period of the kingdom of Northumbria, and was probably the chief residence of David I. as Earl and King. The splendid Abbey of Kelso, on the other side of the Tweed, was a fitting adjunct to this seat of royalty. When the border line of England was advanced farther northwards than in the time of David, the possession of Roxburgh Castle, known later as "The Castle of Marchmound," was usually one of the most keenly-contested points in the warfare between the two kingdoms. It was while laying siege to it that James II. lost his life, and so commanding was its position and occupation that it was finally thought the best policy to throw it down. It was costly to keep, and hazardous to be in the hands of an enemy. Something of it survived in the beginning of the century. The site of so much splendour, and the scene of so many valiant struggles, is now marked simply by green and shapeless mounds—

> "Crushed are thy halls, save where the peasant sees
> One moss-clad ruin rise between the trees—
> The still green trees whose mournful branches wave
> In solemn cadence o'er the hapless brave."*

The Castle of Peebles stood on the highest point of the peninsula between the Tweed and the Eddlestone, at the head of the High Street, and a little behind the site of the present parish church. The castle was old even

* Leyden, *Scenes of Infancy*, Part III., p. 58.

in the time of David I. William the Lion, between 1165 and 1214,* gives to the abbey of Kelso "the chapel of the Castle of Peebles, with the carucate of land belonging to it, and with the *redditus* of ten shillings of the 'ferme' of the burgh which King David my grandfather assigned to the same chapel for perpetually celebrating in it divine service for the soul of Earl Henry my father." The monks are laid under an obligation of erecting there a suitable and fair chapel (pulcram capellam), and finding for it seemly ecclesiastical decorations (honesta ornamenta ecclesiastica), and a perpetual chaplain. The Castle of Peebles was standing and inhabited in the early part of last century. It was afterwards pulled down, and the materials converted, according to the morality and taste of the time, into one of the least architecturally attractive parish edifices in Christendom.

The Castle of Traquair still stands, incorporated probably with the more modern yet still ancient additions to the picturesque mansion. From it, but a short time ago, was carried out to her grave the last direct descendant of the line that held it for more than four hundred years, and in whose veins ran the blood of the Lady Jane Beaufort, whom the youthful James I. saw from the narrow bole of the tower of Windsor, as a moving vision in the garden among the trees, with, as he says—

"Beautee eneuch to make a world to dote."

* *Confirmatio Regis Willelmi super Donationibus antecessorum suorum —Liber de Calchou*, C. 13.

These were the chief seats of royalty from the time of David I., and even before it, until the death of Alexander III. From these castles were issued many of the most ancient and important charters of the kingdom. Numerous references to those charters might be given. Some of them are very curious and suggestive. On the banks of the Molendinar there had arisen, in the early centuries, amid the thickets of the Wood of Caledon, a small hamlet round a wattled church. This hamlet gradually grew in importance through its proximity to the church. At length William the Lion, while living at the castle of Traquair, sometime between 1175 and 1178, granted a charter to the bishop and his successors, constituting the hamlet a bishop's burgh, that it might be a mart of barter with the rude inhabitants of the Highlands.* Thus was the city of Glasgow gathered, as it were, from the wilderness, and enabled to become what it now is. The parish of Traquair now (at least in 1861) contains some 687 people; Glasgow has nearly 600,000.

The later kings of Scotland, of the houses of Bruce and Stewart, were led, either by choice or policy, to reside north of the Border district—in Holyrood, Linlithgow, Dunfermline, and Falkland. The direct connection of the royal line with the valley of the Tweed may be said to have terminated with the death of Alexander III., in 1285-6. The comparatively peaceful and prosperous era of the Scottish monarchy from Malcolm Canmore to the last of the Alexanders closed

* *Historians of Scotland*, Vol. v.; *Life of Kentigern*, p. cv.

fitly amid dark weird, and ghostly omen. The Princess of Norway—the grand-daughter of Alexander III.—was now the heir to the Scottish crown, and the sole hope of the people. Alexander, widowed and childless, was urged to a second marriage. He was wedded at Jedburgh to Yoleta, daughter of the Count de Dreux. In the evening there was a masked ball in the Abbey in honour of the nuptials. The entertainment was more splendid than any that had been in Scotland before. But the joy was marred and the splendour shaded by the sudden appearance of a ghastly figure, which joined for some moments in the dance, seeming to glide as a shadow among the throng; then, amid an awe on every heart, passed away, no one knowing whence it had come or whither it went. The mysterious apparition was readily regarded by the popular mind as a presage of a coming calamity, and the death of Alexander in the following spring was to it the fulfilment of the omen. "Where," said the Earl of March to Thomas the Rhymer, as the morning rose clear and fair on which the bard had prophesied the storm, "where is the tempest, Thomas?" "The day is not done," said the seer, and "before the ninth hour" there did "blow the worst wind and tempest Scotland ever felt," when the news of the death of the last of the kings, ere the War of Independence, passed over the ill-fated land. "Perhaps," says Mr. Innes, "no other nation in Europe was so unhappily situated as Scotland, from the conclusion of the bright period that ended with

the last Alexander till the Union."* It may be added that the most unhappy part of this unhappy kingdom during that period, at least for the ordinary upland man and citizen or burgess, was this Border district. It was exposed to outrage, fire, and sword from the south. Every English army must pass through it; and each time this happened the country was made desolate either by the foe or by the inhabitants seeking to starve the enemy. Even in times of peace there were constant reprisals from each side of the Border; and the internal raids, and the family feuds, were of the most savage, bloody, and persistent kind—almost entirely unchecked by central authority or law.

* *Burghs of Scotland,* Pref., xviii.

VII.

SIR SIMON FRASER AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

THE fatal fall of Alexander over the cliff at Kinghorn closed what had been a peaceful and prosperous time for Scotland, and led to a state of trouble, strife, and suffering which few kingdoms have undergone. The period between his death in March, 1285-6, and June, 1314, the date of the battle of Bannockburn, exhibits the spectacle of the most complete antagonism in history between the spirit of English or Norman feudal domination and aggression, and that individualism of character which shows itself in the unquenchable instinct of freedom and persistent self-assertion of the Anglo-Saxon Scot. In the conflict of this epoch there were revealed and nurtured that strength of will and capacity of patient endurance, that deep-seated instinct of self-rule and sense of political independence, which are to this day conspicuous features of the people on the plains of Lowland Scotland. And in the middle period of this conflict—that is, between the retirement of William

Wallace from public life, after his defeat at Falkirk, and the crowning of Robert Bruce at Scone, Sir Simon Fraser, Dominus, Lord or Laird of Oliver Castle, was the most conspicuous actor.

At the death of Alexander III., the father, also Sir Simon Fraser, represented a family that had been of great influence in the country during several previous reigns. Popular tradition ascribed their origin to Hungary, and carried their lineage back to the days of the fabled Achaius and the mythic Scoto-French league of that period. It made the first of the Frasers Thane of the Isle of Man—an office which was held to have been transmitted to his descendants for several generations. This tradition may at least be taken as implying a general belief in the antiquity of the family. The Frasers of Oliver were indeed the only feudal barons who have had place or power in Peeblesshire. They sat in the Scottish Parliaments or General Councils of the kingdom from Malcolm IV. to the death of Alexander III., and even later, as barons—that is, Domini or Lairds, holding *de capite*, or directly of the crown—along with the Bruces, the Mowbrays, Grahams, Maxwells, Flemings, Comyns, and Soulis, and the ancestors of many of the ancient Scottish families who afterwards became Lords of Parliament, or hereditary peers;* for the distinction between holders of baronies and Lords of

* See Nisbet's *Heraldry*, I. and II., p. 114. *Historical Documents (Scotland)*, I., p. 130.

Parliament did not arise until the time of James I. In the early Parliaments, the members sat simply on equal titles as holders of baronies.

The name was as frequently spelt Fresel and Frisel as Fraser. In the French of the time it was rendered *de Fresel.* This was probably the original form, and points to some place abroad whence the designation was taken. Fresel or Frisel was for many centuries the usual form of the name in Tweeddale. We have Frisel in county and in town all through the middle ages, and down to our own times. This is but one among several instances in which we have to look to traditionary usage for preserving what is really the oldest type of name, whether of person or of place. It is not unlikely that the adoption of the *fraisse, frases,* or *frasiers* as their arms—the flower of the wood-strawberry, which grows so abundantly in the glades of Neidpath—was connected with the change of name. These cinquefoil strawberry flowers, on an azure shield, were born by the Frasers, at least from the time of the Crusades. At first the flowers were five, or more correctly, six in number. On the seal of Sir Andrew Fraser, Sheriff of Stirling in the time of Edward, they appear on the seal as 3, 2, and 1. In more modern times they were reduced to three. Curiously enough, in the famous Roll of the siege of Caerlaverock, in the year 1300, the arms of Sir Simon de Fresel, who at that time was serving on the English side, are given differently from what are historically known as

those of the family from the earliest period. The writer of the account, who is supposed to have been an eye-witness of the splendid pageantry of the siege, tells us that

> "Symon de Fresel de cele gent
> Le ot noire à rosettes de argent"—
>
> "Simon de Fresel of that company
> Bore black, with roses of silver."*

They are arranged properly as 3, 2, 1. Possibly the rosettes here spoken of were really the strawberry flowers, the *frases* or *frasiers* of the family. The term had perhaps a wider meaning than now, just as the *rosaceæ* with botanists include the wood-strawberry, or the writer was mistaken in his observation of the pennon of Fraser.

The Frasers certainly settled in Tweeddale at an early period. Fruid, in the wilds of Tweedsmuir, has been popularly regarded as their first property and seat. It was, at least, the last held by their name, and that as late as the fifteenth century. We have no trace of the Frasers in the time of David I., but in the reign of Malcolm IV. (1153-1165), Adam Fraser gives to the Abbey of Newbotle the lands of Southrig, part of Southale, and mentions a gift of his uncle Oliver to the same house. This was not unlikely the head of the house at the period—the same who gave his name to Oliver Castle.†

* *Roll of Caerlaverock*, p 15.

† *Registrum de Neubotle*, C. 77. Nisbet's *Heraldry*, I., p. 388.

During the same reign (1160) Symon Fraser gives to the Church of St. Mary of Kelso, the church and wood of Keth (Keith), near Hadyngton.* The male line of this branch of the family in East Lothian seems to have terminated in the following generation, for we find in a deed about 1199 a confirmation by Hugo Lorens, and Eda, his wife, daughter and heir of Symon Fraser, of the Church of Keth, land and wood.† The estate of Keith passed shortly afterwards, before 1230, to Philip Marescallus, ‡ the Marshal of Scotland, and twenty years afterwards, in 1250, § this new family had assumed the name of Keth-Marescall, or Keith-Marischall, by which it was to be long known in Scottish history.

In the next reign, that of William, the brother of Malcolm and grandson of David (1165-1214), Bernardus Fraser or Fresil, Gilbertus Fraser, Thomas Fraser, appear repeatedly as witnesses to deeds in connection with Melrose.‖ Bernardus Fraser continues to appear very frequently through the succeeding reign—that of Alexander II. (1214-49.)¶ He was evidently attached to the Court, followed it wherever it went, and turns up now at Traquair, then at Rokesburgh—two of the most important royal castles on the Borders at that period. He was made Sheriff of Stirling in 1234, and is

* *Liber de Calchou*, I., Carta 85. † *Ibid*, I., Carta 86.

‡ *Ibid*, C. 87. § *Ibid*, C. 88.

‖ *Munimenta de Melros*, I., Cartæ, ‡ 73, 120, 76, 48, 72, 74, 77, 101, 102, 104.

¶ See *Munimenta de Melros*, I., Carta 203 *et passim*.

said to have died in 1250.* In this reign, also, we have one attestation by Dominus Symon Fraser, Miles. † Gilbertus Fraser also attests twice at least in this reign. A Gilbert Fraser was Sheriff of Traquair, under Alexander II.‡ He is said to have been the father of three distinguished sons, viz., Symon, Andrew, and William. Symon, the eldest, is supposed to be the same with Symon, the father of the hero of Roslin. Andrew became Sir Andrew Fraser, Sheriff of Stirling. William was the well-known Chancellor, and Bishop of St. Andrews in the time of Edward I.§ In the next and last reign of the direct line of Malcolm Canmore—that of Alexander III. (1249-1285) —Andreas Fraser, son of the late Gilbert Fraser, Miles, with the consent of Beatrix, his wife, gives to Kelso a carucate of land in West Gordon. This was about 1280.‖ He was dead in 1308. These references all testify to the power and spread of the family over the country, long before the death of Alexander III. Other members of the family were besides *vice-comites* or Sheriffs of Stirling and Fife, and some of them appear in Dumfries. It is in this last reign—that of Alexander III.—that a clear light begins to break on the descent and parentage of Symon Fraser, who fought at Roslin. Symon Fraser, his

* Chalmers, *Caledonia*, I., p. 553. † *Ibid*, Carta 276.

‡ See *Registrum de Neubotle*, C. 121.

§ *Ibid*, C. 276, and *Liber de Calchou*, I., C. 168 (C. 1300.) Compare also *Liber de Calchou*, I., C. 303, 361.

‖ *Liber de Calchou*, I., Carta 124.

father, appears frequently in public documents, and his title is *vice-comes*, or Sheriff of Peebles. Dominus Symon Fraser, vice-comes de Peblys, is witness in 1266 to the resignation to Kelso of the lands of Ardach, in the parish of Lesmahagow.* Besides holding the office of Sheriff of Peebles, he was now or subsequently the keeper of the forests of Selchirche and Traquair. The same appends his seal to a deed of 1271, which, in granting lands, gives also the privilege of Court of *bludwyth*, and *birthynsac.*† He is witness under the same designation to a deed, still in the time of Alexander III., which refers to the lands of "Tor seu Windilaws in territorio de Edulfistun." Among other witnesses are Richard, Vicar of Peebles, Johannes Venator (Hunter), Erchebaldus de Hopekelioch.‡ In a deed drawn "apud Traquair—duodecimo die Decembris, anno regni nostri sexto decimo," that is, 1265—Symon Fraser attests.§ He survived the death of Alexander in 1285-6. He and his son, also Symon, are mentioned among the *Magnates Scotiæ*, in the transactions connected with the settlement of the Crown after the death of the Maiden of Norway, in 1290.

The father was a man skilled and trusted in public affairs. We have a curious and interesting glimpse of him as a stern and worthy patriot, in a document which represents

* *Liber de Calchou*, I., Carta 190. † *Ibid*, Carta 474.

‡ *Reg. Epis. Glasg.*, Carta 216.

§ *Mun. de Melros*, C. 323. See also 324, 325, 347.

him as present at Carham, on the Borders, February 3rd, 1289. John le Massun, a Gascon merchant, lodged a claim with Edward I. against the Bishop of St. Andrews and others, executors of the late King, Alexander III., for payment of a certain number of casks of Bordeaux, and other goods, said to have been delivered to the Scottish King. The English King, eager to assert his surreptitious authority, sent a brief empowering Thomas de Normanville and Gwychardus de Charrun to try the case, with a jury, at Carham. The executors of the Scottish King did not appear, but certain "attornies" came in their room, among whom were Simon and Richard Fraser. The nominees of Edward insisted on the case being conducted as in the Sheriffdom of Northumberland. The representatives from Scotland refused, and would allow no authority in the circumstances beyond the law according to use and wont of the Marches. They finally absolutely declined the jurisdiction of the court. A decision was ultimately given, partially in favour of Massun, and on the ground, apparently, of his own declaration, although he was a worthless fellow, guilty both of fraud and felony,* and had escaped hanging through the clemency of Alexander. The representatives of the executors no doubt perceived to some extent the intended issue of the case, whether they fully recognised or not the steady time-biding craft of the English King, as he thus worked his way to the assumption of supreme power in Scotland.

* *Historical Documents (Scotland)*, 1, p. 73.

Sir Simon Fraser next appears as one of the Barons of the Scottish Parliament held at Brigham, near Berwick, March 14th, 1289-90.* This Parliament confirmed the provisions of the Treaty of Salisbury for the transport across the wild northern sea of Margaret the Maiden of Norway, now the Queen of Scotland. Edward's design was to have her married to his eldest son. This found favour with the Scottish leaders. But before the end of September in that year, the young fair girl of Norway, about whom they were negotiating, was lying dead in a ship in a bay of the Orkneys.

The next public act of the life of Simon Fraser is his submission to the English King. Edward had gradually worked his way, until he was in a position to declare himself the superior and direct lord of the kingdom of Scotland. He had already got formal possession of the kingdom and castles. He now required the fealty of the nobles of the country. The oath was but too readily taken, and we find that on the 13th day of June, 1291, the majority of the great nobles of the land took the oath of allegiance to him in the most solemn manner, by touching and kissing the Gospels in that green meadow opposite the Castle of Norham, near the Tweed.† Fraser was not among the "milites" and "barones" who did homage that day. Perhaps he kept back as long as it was

* *Historical Documents*, I., p. 129. For the Treaty of Brigham, see under 18th July, 1290.

† *Ragman Rolls*, p. 10.

safe, or he found the ride from Oliver to Norham long and tedious. But next day, the 14th of June, he, along with his relation, Richardus dictus Syward, and Alexander, son of the Earl of Meneteth, appeared and swore their fealty, if not on the green meadow, at least in a certain manor (in quodam manerio), near Norham. The minute and indefatigable Johannes Erturi de Cadomo records the submission with his usual explicitness and sense of its importance.

The attempt made in the case of Massun, and other ominous circumstances, were as the gathering of the cloud about to darken and desolate the land. The old lord of Oliver Castle did not long survive the date of his allegiance to Edward. He rode up the Tweed to Neidpath or Oliver, there to die in the autumn of 1291, with the feeling of a dark shadow over the bright memories of the reigns of two prosperous kings. He passed away in the narrow chamber of his dim-lit peel, not without ominous foreboding of the troubles that were coming fast on his well-loved land. But Providence was kind to the old man, for if death spared him the knowledge of the heroism, it spared him also the consciousness of the worse than brutal fate, of his gallant son.

Sir Simon Fraser, the son, now comes forward to take part in the troubled affairs of the kingdom. Before tracing his public career, we may take a glimpse of him in his more private capacity, which shows something of the personal

character of the man, and his relations to the Church of the time. In the *Munimenta of Melros* we have two curious documents, in which he is the mover. They are between 1291 and 1306. The first, No. 355, is a "Carta de Kingildoris et Hopcartan." In this Symon Fraser, Miles, son and heir of the late Dominus Symon Fraser, for the salvation of his own soul, and the salvation of the souls of all his predecessors and successors, concedes to God and the Church of St. Mary of Melrose, and the monks serving God there, that gift which his father made to those monks of the whole land of South Kingildoris,* with the chapel of St. Cuthbert of Kingildoris, on the south side of the burn of Kingildoris (ex parte anstrali rivuli de Kingildoris), and similarly of the whole land of Hopcarthane, freely and absolutely as his father gave them. Then he adds to his father's gift free entry and exit for all their animals and men following them, for purposes of pasture, between Hesilyard and Haldeyhardsted. These lands and privileges are to be held by the monks as freely as he does himself, in a writing which he holds of Dominus Laurencius Fraser, late Dominus de Drumelliare. The witnesses are Dominus Andreas Fraser, Miles, Willelmus Perer, formerly Sheriff of Twedal, Stephanus de Glenwhim, Robertus Hastinges, Patricius de Maleuile, Michail de Wythtone. The date of this deed is ascertained to be after 1296, as Laurence Fresel, of the county of Peebles, no doubt of Drumelliare, is on the *Rag-*

* *South Kingdoris* in the charter, but this is an erratum.

man Roll of that year, and he is now referred to as dead. The deed immediately following this * is by the same donor, and to the monks of Melrose. It is simply a sequel to the former. He gives to them free passage for their "cariagia," with "plaustris" (four-wheeled waggons) and "carectis" (carts), through his land of Hoprew, which lies lower down the Tweed than Hopcartan and Kingildoris. Then he specifies the road they are to take, which extends beyond the moor of Hoprewe, viz., from the burn which is called Merburn to the royal road (viam regalem) below the land of Edwylston. This can only mean what is now the road through the Meldon Glen. The witnesses are the same, and the deed has evidently been executed at the same time as the former one. Patricius de Maleuile was probably a son or relative of William de Maleuile, who is on the *Ragman Roll*, among those belonging to the county of Peebles, in 1296.† The name is still preserved in Mailingsland or Melville's land, about two miles from Peebles, in the valley of Eddleston. Sir Symon Fraser, in gratuitously granting free passage to the monks through the lands of Hoprew, was either less knowing or more pious than a neighbouring laird—William Purveys de Mosspennoc —who, some years before, in the time of Alexander II., sold to them a similar privilege for twenty shillings sterling.‡ The very intimate relation to the Church on the part of Sir

* *Munimenta de Melros*, Carta 356.

† *Ragman Rolls*, p. 125.

‡ *Munimenta de Melros*, I., Carta 238. *Willelmi Purveys de Mosspennoc* (now Mossfennan).

Simon Fraser, and others in alliance with him, shows very clearly that they were really the representatives of the national feeling of Scotland towards Rome, which had arisen with the Saxon Margaret, and had been fostered and developed by David I., his grandsons, and their successors. It was under the shadow, and latterly under the express protection of the Church, that the representatives of the old Scottish nationality fought against the feudal Normans. And when the fortunes of the Scottish national party were at their lowest ebb, it was to Rome that they looked for and from Rome they found moral aid and encouragement.

Simon Fraser, the son, did not succeed his father in his offices. He was tardy in submitting to Edward. It was not until the 23rd of July, 1291, that he appears to have taken the oath of allegiance. The "Symon de Freschele," who presented himself in the Monastery of Lindores on that day, was no doubt the younger Fraser. Edward, now acting as if he had a paramount right to the Kingdom of Scotland, apparently did not trust the son to stand by his interests. Accordingly he passed over the claims of young Fraser, after the death of his father, and in January, 1291-2, he confided the keeping of the Forest of Selkirk to William, the son of John Comyn. Next year Comyn was succeeded in the office by Thomas de Burnham. It is obvious that Fraser at this period, and until the year 1300, was not recognised by Edward as favourable to his claims.

In the Treaty of Brigham (18th July, 1290) between the Scottish Parliament and Edward, the latter bound himself most stringently to observe the independence of Scotland. Two years later (1292-3), when he had succeeded in seating his creature, John Baliol, on the throne as a feudal vassal, he, of his own authority, absolutely abolished the provisions of this Treaty which stood in the way of his unlimited claim as Lord Paramount of the kingdom. By a purely arbitrary act, he swept away the whole provisions against Scottish litigants being obliged to plead before the English Parliament as the final court of appeal.* This is but one among many proofs of the thoroughly despotic temper of the Norman Edward—a temper which was the natural outcome of the haughty and inhuman feudal feeling of the time. It was a deep, perhaps not very explicit, sense of the nature of this feeling which led the Lowland Scots of the time—many of them Saxon fugitives from England—to most persistent opposition to the foreign and feudal rule of Edward. The fusion of the two kingdoms at this early period, had it been accomplished in mutual sympathy, would doubtless have produced many social advantages, and saved a world of misery. But the instinct of manhood was too powerful in the Saxon to be obliterated or even long overawed by any arrogant pretensions to superiority, however imposing.

When the design of the English King to usurp the sove-

* Burton's *History*, II., p. 254.

reignty of Scotland became distinctly manifest, Sir Simon Fraser is found on the side of the Scottish or national party. He is not heard of certainly, in a public capacity, in the four years from 1292, the date of the accession of Baliol, but he comes forward against the English interest in the critical year of 1296. He was obviously one of the prisoners taken by the English in the battle of Dunbar of that year. This battle was fought on Friday the 27th April. The Earl of Dunbar, the head of one of the very oldest and most powerful houses of the kingdom, was now and for many years afterwards on the English side. He had, unfortunately, like most of the Scottish barons of the time, to consider the interests of his family in their English estates, as well as the general interest of the nation. In such a comparison we know, as a rule, which interest goes to the wall. He was now with Edward at Berwick. The town had been taken by a stratagem reprobated as mean in that age of chivalry; and man, woman, and child in the place were indiscriminately put to the sword. The streets were for days flushed with blood. The town itself suffered so much that it sunk at that period from the position of the great commercial centre of the northern part of the island, to a fourth or fifth-rate place. The Countess of Dunbar heard the news of the sack of Berwick; her sympathies had apparently been with the national party; and, sinking the feelings of the wife in those of the patriot, she shut the gates of her Castle of Dunbar against both

Edward and her husband. We do not know, of course, whether the Earl or the King was the more enraged. A Scottish army, or rather assembly of men, said to consist of 40,000 foot and 1,500 horse, quickly gathered round the Castle of Dunbar to oppose the English. Edward sent forward from Berwick the Earl of Warenne, a great military leader, at the head of his troops. The Scottish army was signally defeated. The Castle and Countess were taken, with many prisoners of note. The slaughter of the fugitives was very persistent. It was continued to the confines of the Forest of Selkirk, whence the army had been mainly drawn. This fatal fight made Edward master of the country. Sir Simon Fraser was one of the captives. Among the petitions for sustenance made to the English King by wives of Scotsmen prisoners in England, in the list of September 3rd, 1296, we have that of Maria, wife of Sir Simon Fraser. She says her husband held in Scotland 200 *marcatas terræ*—merks of land—she is allowed for sustenance 50 merks of land.*

* *Historical Documents*, II., p. 96.—Among the prisoners of importance taken in the Castle of Dunbar was Fraser's relative, Sir Richard Siward. In 1292 Siward was in the English interest, and was made Governor by Edward of the Castles of Dumfries, Wigton, and Kirkcudbright. In 1294 he was summoned to attend the English King in his expedition into Wales. In the interval between these two events Siward is said to have married the sister of Sir Simon Fraser, and when we hear of him again he is on the Scottish side, being captured at Dunbar. This is the statement in the *Roll of Caerlaverock*, p. 15, Wright's edition. But the wife of Siward at this time was not the sister of Sir Simon Fraser, but the widow, apparently, of his father, Simon Fraser, and probably Sir Simon's stepmother. We have the petition of the wife of Siward while he was a prisoner

Meanwhile Edward is extending his hold over the country. On the 14th June, 1296, he was in Edinburgh, living in the Abbey of Holyrood. He took the castle after a siege, and then commenced his triumphal progress through the kingdom. This he completed in twenty-one weeks, exacting homage from most of the principal people of the country, particularly the lay territorial lords and the churchmen. In the early part of July, he formally degraded and deposed his creature, John Baliol, the King. Baliol had shortly before renounced his allegiance to Edward, though the validity of the deed is questioned. It is shrewdly supposed to be one of Edward's forgeries.

On the 24th of January, 1297, Edward invited the Scottish nobles and barons to accompany him to Flanders, to take part in the war he was carrying on with the Flemings against the King of France. He had feudal pretensions there also, as Duke of Aquitaine. And when he was not fighting and massacring in Scotland, he was sure to be staining the fields of Flanders or of France with blood.

in England, of date [Sept. 3] 1296. Under this date Maria, wife of Sir Richard Siward who is in the prison of our Lord the King, asserts that her husband had five hundred *marcatas terræ* or merks of land, with her heritage and dowry. She further says that she has nine children, of whom four are Sir Richard's by a former wife, and five Simon Fresel's, formerly her husband. She got forty pounds of land—(*Hist. Doc.*, II., p. 93). Siward afterwards gained his liberty by again identifying himself with the cause of Edward. He became Governor of Dumfries in 1309, and is supposed to have died in 1310. Among other petitioners of the same district with Fraser is "Sarra," who had been the wife of Duncan del Glen, and now four years a widow. She asks her heritage, which is *seised*, in the hand of Earl Patrick [of Dunbar]. She is allowed to have the whole quietly—(*Hist. Doc.*, II., p. 96).

Sir Simon Fraser, tired, naturally, of an English prison, joined the English forces in their Continental expedition. He was with Edward in Flanders in the end of this year—1296-7. Sir Simon Fraser, Banerettus, receives for his pay (pro vadiis suis), from 13th September to 11th November of this year—sixty days—four shillings per day; his soldier (Miles) receives two shillings, and his two shield-bearers (Scutiferi) receive twelve pence each—in all, twenty-four pounds. From the 12th November to the 19th of the same month, eight days, he, his soldier, and shield-bearers, receive payment at the same rate at Ghent—in all, sixty-four shillings. [Dated 13th January, 1298.]

It may be noted, in passing, that William Wallace, on the 11th September, 1297, two days before the date at which Fraser's pay commences, had gained the memorable victory of Stirling Bridge, and Surrey, the English commander, had ridden from the disaster as fast as his horse could carry him to Berwick. It was clear that Edward had now business on hand nearer home.

As a reward for the services of Fraser in Flanders, and in consequence also of the fealty which he had now done to Edward, the English King issued from Ghent a mandate to restore his lands, forfeited on account of his share in the last war in Scotland. Curiously enough, there was serving along with Fraser in Flanders one Simon de Horsbroke. His lands, forfeited in the same cause, are also ordered to be restored to him in the same document, on account of fealty

and similar service rendered to the king.* Horsbroke was a neighbouring Tweeddale laird, the friend and companion in arms of Fraser. His descendants still hold the lands. On March 27th, 1299, Fraser's lands and tenements were formally restored to him.† From the terms of the first document, Fraser seems to have possessed lands in England as well as in Scotland, a circumstance which, in the case of the more powerful nobles, tended more than any other cause to render their allegiance to nationalism in Scotland unsteady.‡

Edward returned from Flanders in 1298, and as soon as possible collected an army to check the progress of Wallace, and punish the Scots. In this he succeeded in the battle of Falkirk, which was forced upon Wallace, contrary to his own masterly tactics of delay. The defeat of the inferior army of the Scots was complete. The circular clumps of Scottish spearmen, who valiantly withstood the well-mounted English horse, were finally broken and dispersed. The centres of

* *Historical Documents*, III., p. 230. † *Ibid*, II., p. 369.

‡ Among those dwelling on this side of the Scot's Water—the Firth of Forth—to whom an invitation is sent to accompany Edward to Flanders, is John de Barde (May 24th, 1297). This is evidently Baird, and he may have been of the house of Posso in Manor, or of the stock which had settled in Clydesdale. Previously to this, September 3rd, 1296, Edward, from Berwick-on-Tweed, sent letters to the Sheriffs of the counties of Scotland, ordering restoration of lands to those who had sworn fealty to him. Among others addressed is "Thomas de Burdis, Vicecomes de Pebblis." *Burdis* is probably a mistake for *Bardis—i. e.*, Baird. The original document is considerably faded and defaced, and some of the names are doubtful. Joannes de Baddeby is Vice-comes of Berwick—(*Hist. Doc.*, II., p. 90-91.) De Baddeby is the name of a proprietor in Manor as early as the time of Alexander II. (1214-1249).

the clumps of spears were occupied by the Archers of the Forest, already famous for their skill with the bow, acquired in hunting the deer on the hills of the Tweed, the Ettrick, and the Yarrow. After the fight, their tall and shapely forms, as they lay dead on the field, won the admiration and, we may hope, the sympathy of the victors.

This circular clumping was a new and bold method of military arrangement, first devised by the genius of Wallace, and left as a legacy to Robert Bruce.* It was the most important contribution of the time to the science of war. Without it Bruce would hardly have gained the Battle of Bannockburn. It helped to secure Scottish nationality and independence.

After Falkirk, Wallace disappears from Scottish history. We know little more of him at all, until we hear of his capture and barbarous death. We have, however, one or two authentic notices of him as engaged in a sort of guerilla warfare, along with Sir Simon Fraser, against the English in 1304.†

It is very probable that Sir Simon Fraser accompanied Edward back from Flanders, and was present on the English side at this disastrous battle. He was now for some years an important and trusted officer of Edward I. in Scotland. He was made Governor or Warden of the Forest in the English interest. It was here his Scottish estates lay. But somehow it seems to have been the constraint of outward circumstances alone which kept him loyal to Edward. His heart was all

* Burton, II., p. 380.

† See below p. 215.

along with the national cause. Possibly, also, he could hardly bear, as one of the old nobility of the country, to see the whole land flooded with foreigners, and the highest offices filled by men who, though originally of the same foreign stock with himself, and of equal feudal rank, were still strangers in his native country, where his forefathers had been right hand men to its ancestral kings. If he had consulted his personal interest alone, or even mainly, he would have remained true to Edward. He had large estates, and his fidelity would have gained him greater. By going over to the popular party he had everything to lose, and little prospect of anything to gain. Yet he finally abandoned the English interest when the fortunes of his country were far from promising, and when most clearly a self-seeking policy would have dictated continued allegiance to the English king.

So early as August 9th, 1298, Fraser is suspected of secret complicity with the desperate and struggling Scottish party in the country. John de Kingston, Constable of Edinburgh Castle, writing to Walter de Langton, Lord Treasurer of England, refers to a rising in Scotland, headed by the Earl of Buchan (Comyn) and others, who are proceeding towards the Forest and Borders, where they have sympathisers. The Constable shrewdly suspects Sir Simon Fraser, Governor of the Forest, of complicity with the ringleaders. He has been eating and drinking with them as in amity. The people of the Forest readily surrendered themselves to the expedition.

Fraser left his post under pretext of giving alarm, but this proceeding the Constable thinks would have been unnecessary, if he had simply warned the garrisons in good time of the approach of the enemy.*

Be this as it may, the suspicion of Fraser's loyalty does not appear to have extended further at this period. It was not apparently shared in by the King. He is still trusted, and receives commissions to execute in the English interest. Along with the Sheriffs of Roxburgh and Jedburgh, he is to fix the pay of the garrison of Berwick (1298).† The same year he and Sir Walter de Huntercombe, "the handsome Huntercombe" of the *Roll of Caerlaverock*, Governor of Edinburgh Castle, are commissioned to distribute among the English garrisons in Scotland, stores that are to be shipped at Berwick and centred at Edinburgh Castle.‡ A foray *(chevachée)* is contemplated from Edinburgh Castle upon the Scottish party under Buchan and Sir John de Soules, which is now harassing the English garrisons of the south. Sir Simon Fraser is very strictly commanded, in a letter direct from the King (November 25th, 1298), at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to aid John de Kingston, Constable of the Castle, in his expedition, with twenty armed horse *(chevaus covertz)*.§ A few days later (December 1st, 1298) it is arranged at Berwick that Sir Simon Fraser should ascertain the movements of the force under Lord Buchan, so

* *Historical Documents*, II., p. 302. † *Ibid*, II., p. 332.
‡ *Ibid*, II., p. 291. § *Ibid*, II., p. 336.

that the foray from Edinburgh upon it may be made in a concerted manner in the course of a fortnight.* On July 16th of the same year Fraser is summoned to a meeting at York on the fortifications of the castles of Scotland, and the custody of the marches. † At the same time he is appointed one of a commission in regard to the delivery of Scottish prisoners out of the Castle of Berwick-on-Tweed. ‡

Shortly after midsummer of 1300, Sir Simon Fraser's pennon figured amid the glittering array of the nobility and knighthood of England that advanced to the siege of Caerlaverock. The splendid pageantry of the attacking force is graphically depicted by the eye-witnesss who watched it pass along the shore of the Solway, to the assault of the most perfectly finished Norman Castle—triangular as a shield—which Scotland then possessed. The beauty and the complete fitness of its situation as a tower of defence, impressed the eye of the rhyming chronicler:—

"Caerlaverock was a castle
So strong that it did not fear siege
Before the King came there;
* * * * * * * * *
It was formed like a shield,
For it had only three sides in circuit,
With a tower at each angle.
* * * * * * * * *
And I believe you will never see
A castle more beautifully situated than it;

* *Historical Documents*, II., p. 339. † *Ibid*, II., p. 379.
‡ *Ibid*, II., p. 381.

For at will could one see
Towards the west the Irish Sea,
And to the north the fair plain,
Surrounded by an arm of the sea."*

We know the heroic defence made by the garrison. When taken, some sixty men, to the astonishment of the vast host of Edward, were all the castle contained. Whether the great Norman feudal King gave a garment to each of the defenders of the Castle, as one account alleges, or hanged the most of them, according to another, must be left to be decided according to the view each may have formed of his temper. The sacker of Berwick was not unlikely to do the hanging.

Later in the year Edward granted a *souffrance* to the Scots until the ensuing Whitsunday, at the request of the French King. The truce was notified by Edward, with orders to observe it, to Patrick de Dunbar, Earl of March, a powerful and unwavering supporter of the English party in the country, and to Sir Simon Fraser, Warden of the Forest of Selkirk.†

But this year the troubles in the Border Counties from the foraging Scottish party under Buchan and Soules are evidently increasing and causing apprehension to Edward's officers in Scotland. There is a letter to Edward from a person in Scotland (Sept. 18, 1300?) on the subject, in

* *Roll of Caerlaverock*, p. 26 (Wright's ed.).

† Redpath's *Border History*, p. 149.

which he says, "For God's sake, dear Sire, employ some counsel that the Sheriffdom of Peebles be better guarded than it is."* The loyalty to the King of Fraser's patrimonial district is thus obviously not to be depended on. Next year (Sept. 13, 1301) the Sheriff of Peebles is asked by Robert Hastings, writing from Roxburgh, one of the great Castles of the Borders, to assist him against Sir John de Soules, the enemy of the English King.†

The Scottish party was thus at but a low pass in the country, being little more than a guerilla band preying on the English garrisons of the south, and probably on the English border counties. Yet it is at this juncture that we find Sir Simon Fraser casting in his fortunes with the national cause, sacrificing the favour and patronage of the English King, and incurring, as he well knew, the implacable hate of an implacable monarch, one in whom revenge was hardly second to his lust of power. We can scarcely conceive any motive for such a course of conduct in the circumstances of the time, except the tardy outcome of a deep-seated patriotic feeling. What probably partly determined him in his new course was an event which had occurred at the Court of Rome, and which was decidedly in favour of the national party in Scotland. Certain Commissioners from Scotland, or Scotchmen at least, who were entirely opposed to the designs of Edward, had been living at Rome for some time, and striving by their

* *Historical Documents*, II., p. 418. † *Ibid.* II., p. 434.

representations of the facts of the case, and the state of Scotland, to influence the Papal Court in favour of the sovereign independence of their country. Among those who had repaired to Rome in the interest of the Scottish national cause, were William de Lamberton, Archbishop of St. Andrews, and not improbably also William Wallace. This Court, whether in pursuance of its views of the extent of spiritual jurisdiction, or as the representative of the function of the Empire as the final court of appeal in matters of international law in Europe, assumed or occupied the place of arbiter in international disputes.* The result of these dealings with the Court of Rome was that a Papal Bull was sent to Edward, which he received from the hands of Robert Winchelsea, Archbishop of Canterbury, in August, 1300, when he lay with his army at the Castle of Caerlaverock. The Castle had been taken after a memorable siege the previous June. This document absolutely denied his right of superiority over the Kingdom of Scotland, and pointed out the recent facts which were utterly hostile to his claim.† Edward incited his temporal Barons to reply to this, and also himself made a formal answer, in which he most disingenuously perverted the facts connected with the treaty of Brigham into an acknowledgment of his claims. His reply to the Papal Bull was transmitted to Rome on the 15th May, 1301. It is somewhat remarkable that Sir Simon Fraser's open defection from the

* Compare Burton, *History of Scotland*, II., p. 313. † *Ibid.*, II., 313-14.

English interest took place in the autumn of this year, just when the country must have been full of the news that the Court of Rome had emphatically pronounced in favour of the Scottish claims to Independence. It is probable enough that this circumstance finally determined Fraser's wavering resolution to devote himself to the popular cause. He was probably at Caerlaverock with Edward when Winchelsea, after great perils by land, delivered the Papal Bull into the hands of the King.

We have, in a letter of Robert Hastings to the English King,* written at Roxburgh the Thursday next after the assumption of our Lady, a very curious and instructive picture of the men who were banded together against Edward for their country's independence. The scene lies as far back as about the 1300. Edward is in possession of nearly all the important towns and castles of the kingdom, but the unquenchable Scottish spirit was beginning to stir to action in the midst of what seemed a hopeless state of affairs. Sir Simon Fraser is Edward's governor of the Forest. His duty was to ward it in the English interest. As we have seen, some of the keener-eyed officers of Edward in Scotland, such as Sir John de Kingston, the governor of Edinburgh Castle, had their suspicions that Fraser was not much to be trusted. They thought him a Scot at heart, an Englishman only by oath, which was but of little account in these days. Be this as it may, on a day in March, 1300,

* *Nat. MSS.*, II., No. VIII., about 1300.

two knights, Sir Ingram de Umframville, and Sir William de Bailliolf, made a raid into the Forest of Selkirk, and harried it, in despite of the Warden. They waited in the Forest until the great lords of Scotland assembled, and there came to them the Bishop of St. Andrews—the well-known Lamberton—the Earl of Carrick, the Earl of Buchan, the Earl of Menteith, Sir John Comyn, the son, and the Steward of Scotland. The town of Roxburgh they found to be too well guarded for an assault, and they remained for some days inactive. And now there arose a scene among themselves very savage and characteristic of the manners and the inflammable state of feeling of the period. Sir David de Graham demanded from the Council the lands and the goods of Sir William Waleis, on the ground that he was going out of the kingdom without the will or leave of the Guardians. Whereupon Sir Malcolm Waleis, the brother of Sir William, rose and declared that the lands and goods of his brother could not be given up, until it was found by a jury whether he went out of the kingdom for profit of the kingdom or not. On this the two knights got excited, gave the lie to each other, and drew their knives. Now was the time for the outburst of jealous feeling on the part of the members of Council. Graham was with Comyn, and Waleis with the Earl of Carrick. Buchan and Comyn imagined that treason of some sort was intended, and Comyn leaped on the Earl of Carrick, and seized

him by the throat, while the Earl of Buchan performed the same office on the Bishop of St. Andrews. It was not till the Steward of Scotland and others went between them that the scuffle was stopped. The Earl of Carrick, the father of King Robert Bruce, is said to have died in 1305. The probability is, however, that it was the son, and not the father, who took part in this scene, as the former was currently designated Earl of Carrick before this period.

In the beginning of September [1301] we find that Fraser has actually joined the Scottish rising under Buchan, Sir John de Soulcs, and others. Buchan and Soules, with their men, are lying at Loudon. Sir Simon Fraser is in command at Stanhouses. The keeper of Lochmaben Castle asks for reinforcements from Edward, under apprehension of an assault by those parties.* On the 10th September Soules attacked Lochmaben Castle, and, after doing damage to the garrison, withdrew his forces. On the 13th Robert Hastings is preparing to attack and capture Soules and the others, if he can. The Sheriff of Peebles is ordered to collect troops.†

This harassing, irregular, and almost predatory form of warfare continued, and apparently grew in strength, greatly to the annoyance of the English garrisons in the country, and to the exasperation of the English King. About the beginning of Lent, 1302-1303, Fraser, in conjunction with Sir John Comyn, of the family of Baliol, delivered the

* *Historical Documents*, II., p. 431. † *Ibid*, II., p. 43.

severest blow which the foreign occupiers received during this period and until Bannockburn. A new and strong body of troops had just been sent into Scotland under Sir John de Segrave, Guardian of Scotland and Governor of Berwick. Segrave, either with the whole or a large portion of his forces, was in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. For the sake of forage, apparently, he had divided his troops into three portions, which were at the distance of some miles from each other. During the previous night Fraser and Comyn, with a body of men chiefly collected in Lanarkshire and Tweeddale, marched rapidly from the Tweed or the Upper Ward across country, and in the early morning surprised and routed Segrave's own division of the English forces near Roslin. Segrave himself was wounded and taken prisoner. It is said that the little Scottish army met and defeated in succession the two remaining divisions of their enemies. There is a statement that the Scots put to death the captives in each successive fight. The explanation of this is that it was necessary in self-defence. The Scots' army was not large enough to defend itself, and also guard the prisoners. If true, this, though not in itself justifiable, was but a reprisal for atrocities quite equal to any perpetrated by them. The cruelties of the English rule could leave the Scots in but one, and that a highly exasperated mood. The affair of Roslin was the last formal stand made by them against the English until Bannockburn, but its success had, no doubt, the effect of maintaining the spirit of the national party.

The popular rising, in which Fraser was a leader, seems to have come to an end in the early part of 1304-5. There was a capitulation of the staff who had professed to rule Scotland in name of King John, which was ratified at Strathorde, 9th February, 1304. It was signed on the part of the Scots by Comyn, Lord of Badenoch, acting guardian and governor, Sir John de Soulis, Alexander de Lyndsay, Simon Fraser, and others. They were to have their lives and estates, but to suffer short periods of exile. This was quite a new policy, savouring of clemency, which Edward had adopted, forced on him by experience of the obstinate Scot.*

In Lent, 1304, which Edward piously kept at St. Andrews, he there held a Parliament or Convention, in which he declared the garrison of Stirling, still holding out against him, the last stronghold of the national party, to be outlaws. Simon Fraser and William Wallace were both summoned to this Parliament. Apparently they distrusted it, for neither appeared. Wallace had not been included in the saving clauses of the capitulation of the 9th February, and not improbably Fraser distrusted the King's faith, or he nobly preferred to stand by Wallace. Both were accordingly pronounced outlaws. We find Fraser and Wallace acting together after this Parliament, engaged apparently in a desperate cause. On the 12th March, 1304, a gift is made to Nicolas Oysel, "vallette" of Earl Ulton, for bringing tidings to the King of a defeat "wrought by the lords

* Burton, *History of Scotland*, II., p. 332.

William de Latymer, John de Segrave, and Robert de Clifford, upon Simone Fraser and William le Walleys at Hopperowe."* This is obviously Happrew, in Peebleshire, part of the estate of Sir Simon Fraser. Wallace and Fraser seem also to have been acting together in Lothian in March of this year.† Wallace was taken next year, 1305, and, as is well-known, was barbarously executed in London on the 3rd of August. It was not, apparently, until now that Fraser actually submitted to Edward. His right-hand friend and helper had been taken. The struggle now seemed fruitless, if not insane.

In a Parliament held at Westminster, October 13th, 1305, special mention is made in an ordinance of two offenders only, viz., Alexander de Lindesai, and Simon de Fraser. Lindesai is frequently mentioned in previous years along with Fraser as apparently a companion in arms. They were together in Flanders. They were doubtless neighbours—the Lindesay estates lying in Upper Clydesdale, while Fraser's were chiefly in the adjoining valley of the Tweed. With a quite unusual clemency, which tells of politic motive, and indicates a change in the unrelenting brutality of Edward's policy to the poor country he was seeking to annex, Lindesai is ordered to continue out of Scotland for half-a-year, while to Fraser is allotted an exile of four years. In

* Burns, *War of Independence*, II., p. 126, who does not know where Hopperowe is.

† *Ibid*, II., p. 127.

that period he is prohibited from residing in England or France.*

Next year, 1305-6, came the crisis in the fortunes of Robert Bruce, fifth of the name, and grandson of that Robert Bruce who had contended with Baliol for the crown of Scotland. The slaughter of Comyn at Dumfries took place on February 10th of this year; and Bruce, now resolved, indeed driven, to risk fortune and life in the struggle for the kingdom, was crowned at Scone on the 27th of March following. The disastrous affair at Methven, near Perth, where Aymer de Valence surprised and routed Bruce, took place on June 24th of the same year. Bruce was now driven to his long course of wanderings and perils, and most of his near relatives were visited with the most bloody reprisals. But for the hardihood and strong personal attachment of Sir Simon Fraser, Bruce would have been taken at Methven, and thus probably the whole course of Scottish history would have been changed. He was three times beaten from his horse, and three times reseated by the hands of Simon Fraser. But what he did for his master, the patriot could not do for himself. He was then, or shortly afterwards, taken prisoner, and, of course, suffered the usual doom of the enemies of Edward. He was hanged, drawn, and quartered at London, the same year, along with John de Strathbogie, Earl of Athol. As he went to the gallows, and as he stood under the fatal tree, his fine personal appear-

* Redpath's *Border History*, p. 156.

ance and whole bearing drew expressions of sympathy, not only from the tender hearts of the women, but from the less susceptible men of the rough London crowd.

I do not know what people may call this kind of conduct; but when a man in private life advances a fraudulent plea for another man's property, and he is unsuccessfully resisted, and the law is too weak to protect the person aggrieved, and finally the aggressor kills his victim with brutal aggravations, we call this murder in the first degree. Ultimately, I trust, there may be such a sense of international morality in the civilized world, that, where even a person called a king does precisely this thing, perhaps on a manifold scale, he may be required to answer alike for fraudulent usurpation and the sealing of it in blood.

It is said that Edward had very enlightened, advanced, and comprehensive ideas of statesmanship; that he wished to fuse England, Scotland, and Wales into one grand monarchy, with anticipation of a great future for the whole. The extreme exasperation he felt, and the savage cruelty he showed to the patriotic Scots who opposed him, were quite a natural result of the baffling and frustration of his wise conception and beneficent designs. In the history of nations, as in that of philosophy, we are very apt to interject into ancient actors and thinkers modern ideas, at which, probably, they would have stood amazed. At the best, this view of the character and motives of Edward is a mere hypothesis. But, supposing him to have held that it was

infinitely better for Scotland to submit to his rule, that hardly gave him a right to use violence, brutality, and murder, to enforce his views. The people of Scotland were not to be slaughtered and disembowelled because they did not acquiesce in his view of what was best for them. He would have shown his enlightenment and sense of what was best for humanity more, if he had refrained from trying to put a nation, with as fair rights as the greater crowd he ruled, in a better position than they desired at the point of the sword. But the truth is, he was no better than his time in thought or feeling. He was simply the highest type in England, perhaps in Europe, had not Rudolph of Hapsburg been his contemporary, of an arrogant feudal lord, who could not bear resistance to his will, who was exasperated by the very appearance of opposition, who was dominated, besides, by a restless lust of power, and who had a spontaneous delight in revenging himself in the blood of any man who stood pre-eminently in the way of his imperious temper. He could, doubtless, be politically clement; but it was greatly against the grain. When, in the beginning of 1304, he showed himself in some degree merciful to the Scots, always excepting the patriot Wallace, the very type of popular resistance to his purpose, it was a mere matter of policy forced on him by experience of the temper of the people, and of the difficulty of carrying out his assumed prerogative by violence and terrorism. His true character was

thoroughly shown by the especially barbarous execution of Sir Simon Fraser, when no purpose was to be served except the gratification of limitless revenge. It was when this new and temporary policy of clemency proved as futile as that of violence which had preceded it, that the natural temper of the man blazed out with a lurid fire. Feeling that death was coming on in the midst of his great and overwhelming demonstration against the Scots, he willed that his body should not be buried until Scotland was subdued, that the flesh should be stripped from the bones, and the skeleton carried at the head of the aggressive army into Scotland. The conception was too revolting and atrocious for any survivor to carry out, even in an age when feudal devotion was the supreme law of life. But it proved that the man who could, while dying, entertain and cherish it, was one in whom the idea of great, enlightened, and beneficent purpose was certainly subordinate to personal exasperation and revenge. "The greatest of the Plantagenets" died at Burgh le Sands, on his progress to Scotland, on 7th July, 1307.* On his tomb he appropriately bears the proud distinction of his life—"Malleus Scotorum."

It may no doubt be said, regarding the execution of Fraser, that he had more than once violated his oath of allegiance or fealty to Edward, and that he suffered as a traitor. This, again, is to treat the actions and obligations of the thirteenth century, as if we were dealing with a settled

* Burton, II., p. 358.

government of the nineteenth. The feudal oath which Fraser took was, as all feudal oaths, a purely conditional one. The overlord was bound to protect, and the vassal to serve, so long as the protection lasted. Anything that occurred in Scotland to the overthrow of Edward's power in the country, would have set his vassal there free. And if the vassal himself, as in Fraser's case, sought to shake off his feudal obligations to Edward, it must be kept in mind that any oath he ever took was a forced oath. It was exacted from him by pressure of exile, loss of liberty, loss of estate, peril of life. And further, this pressure had been brought by Edward upon Fraser, the subject of another kingdom, through his fraudulent and violent attempt to gain the supremacy of that kingdom. Fraser had a perfect right to resist Edward from the beginning of the whole proceedings, as was virtually held by the Papal Court, the arbiter of international disputes in Europe at the time. The compulsion which he exercised over Fraser did not better Edward's right to exact the oath. Will casuists tell us how far such an oath is binding? How far the element of obligation enters into a compulsory oath, and one exacted by a fraudulent pretender from a person absolutely in his power? When this question is settled, we shall be able to appreciate the fact, or estimate the degree of Fraser's personal demerit in the matter of the swearing.

But the truth is, the moral sense of the time was such that an oath of this sort was not regarded as anything

more than a temporary expedient, or acknowledgment of a passing turn in the order of political supremacy. Absolution in the thirteenth century was regularly given by the Church for the violation of such an oath. Edward I. himself secretly sought and got from the Court of Rome absolution from his oath regarding the Forest Charters. He played fast and loose with his feudal oaths to the King of France. Yet we hear nothing of his perjury, from the admirers of "the greatest of the Plantagenets." And the men of the period who swore most of those oaths, and who violated most, were the ecclesiastics highest in office. William of Lamberton, the most patriotic churchman, and, indeed, Scot of the day, swore more oaths of allegiance to Edward, and broke more than probably any other man, lay or clerical, in the kingdom. This was the example of men of the highest religion and morality of the time, and how could a layman be better than his supreme spiritual guides and advisers?

Sir Simon Fraser left two daughters, co-heiresses. Sir Gilbert Hay of Lochquharret, or Locherworth, near the head of the Heriot Water, married Mary, the elder daughter. With her he got the Oliver and Neidpath estates in Tweeddale. Sir Gilbert Hay was a man well worthy of the daughter of Sir Simon Fraser. He had evidently imbibed a large portion of her father's spirit. Along with Sir Alexander Seaton and Sir Neil Campbell, he entered into a solemn bond, 1308, to defend the liberties of the country

and the rights of King Robert Bruce against all mortals, French, English, and Scots.* The son of this marriage, Sir Thomas, father of Sir William Hay of Locherworth, was taken prisoner at the battle of Durham in 1346. A remoter descendant married, during the regency of Albany, Jean, eldest daughter of Hugh Gifford, of Yester. His grandson became Lord Yester in the fifteenth century. The family thus united the estates of the Giffords in East Lothian and the Frasers in Tweeddale. John, the eighth Lord Yester, was made, by Charles I., Earl of Tweeddale, 1st December, 1646. He obtained possession of the ancient estate of the Tweedies of Drummelzier, on the ruin of that family. This estate he bestowed on his second son, William Hay, whose descendants held it for a considerable period. John, second Earl of Tweeddale, was made Marquis of Tweeddale, 26th December, 1694. His son was influential as a statesman, and active in promoting the union between the two kingdoms. He had the soul of a poet, and his song of "Tweedside" is the first indication we have of the beauty of the Tweed having, at least in comparatively modern times, penetrated the heart of a dweller on its banks. The daughter of the first Marquis, Lady Margaret, married Robert, Earl of Roxburgh. She was the subject of a song, entitled "John Hay's Bonnie Lassie." This was said to be the composition of a joiner lad on the Tweed, who had the misfortune to be smitten by the charms of the high-born

* Nisbet's *Heraldry*, II., p. 23.

Lady Margaret. The Hays must have had about them a remarkable atmosphere of poetry. The Tweeddale family sold their estates in Peeblesshire, in 1686, to the first Duke of Queensberry.

The younger daughter of Sir Simon Fraser married Sir Patrick Fleming or Fleeming (Flandrensis), of Biggar, and son of Robert Fleming, who had strongly sided with Bruce in his struggles for the crown. The son of Sir Malcolm, the elder brother of Sir Patrick, was made Earl of Wigton, in 1342, for his eminent services to the family of Bruce. This branch of the family became extinct, the last of the line having sold the estate and earldom of Wigton, in 1371-2, to Archibald Douglas, Lord of Galloway. Eventually Fleming of Biggar was made Lord Fleming, and then Earl of Wigton, by James VI., 19th March, 1606. The Biggar family continued to represent the main line of the Flemings and the junior branch of the Frasers for several hundred years. It is now merged in that of the Lords Elphinstone. The statement, made by some writers, that the last Sir Simon Fraser of Oliver left a son who founded the northern houses of Lovat and Saltoun, is wholly without historical foundation.

VIII.

THOMAS THE RHYMOUR—AND THE EARLY ROMANTIC SCHOOL OF POETRY IN THE LOWLANDS.

THE struggle with Edward I. not only interrupted the social prosperity of the kingdom; it interfered seriously with the literary and intellectual development which had undoubtedly begun under David I. and the Alexanders, and of which we can still detect some faint traces. The Abbeys of Melrose, Dryburgh, Kelso, and Roxburgh were at this early period schools of a higher type, all that was to be found for High School and College. They preserved what kind of learning there was at the time, and, during the period of upwards of one hundred and sixty years, from David I. to the death of Alexander III., were useful as teaching institutions in the Lowlands. We find several references in the chronicles and charters to the sending of the sons of the lairds to those cloister schools. Matilda, the widowed Lady of Molle, a distinguished family of the thirteenth century, gave to the Abbot and Convent of Kelso a portion of her dower

lands, on condition of their maintaining her son with the better and more worthy scholars in "the poors' house" of the abbey. "Exhibebunt Willelmo filio meo in victualibus cum melioribus et dignioribus scholaribus qui reficiunt in domo pauperum."* The date is 1260.

Michael Scot, the reputed "Magus" or Wizard, but a perfectly definite historical character, several of whose writings we still have, was unquestionably connected with a Border family, and may have got his taste for science and philosophy quickened and fostered in some abbey school by the Tweed. He was born, according to tradition, in the Castle of Balwearie in Fife, and acquired the more mature part of his education first at Oxford, then at Paris and Toledo. Recently a piece of evidence has turned up to show that he was living very early in the thirteenth century, as he had already risen to distinction in the Pontificate of Honorius III., who died in 1227. He translated several of the Aristotelic treatises from the Arabic into Latin, with the accompanying commentaries, and was thus influential in introducing a knowledge of Aristotle into western Europe. He was employed by Frederick II. for this purpose; and he must have been among the earliest men of letters who knew more than the scantling of Aristotle familiar to the schoolmen before the middle of

* *Liber de Calchou*, Carta 173. On the phrase *exhibebunt in victualibus*, Mr. Innes remarks that it has given rise to the academical term of *exhibitions*—Preface.

the thirteenth century. At the same time he did not rate Aristotelianism highly. He had evidently a distinctly observational or scientific turn, and he was in philosophy a Platonist. He studied especially astronomy, alchemy, and medicine—probably also the magic or superstitious form of science of the time. Scot was indeed a man of very wide acquirements—mathematician, physician, linguist, and astronomer. His Aristotelic translations and commentaries included the *Ethics*, the *Meteors*, the *De Somno et Vigilia*, *De Sensu et Sensato*, *De Anima*, *De Cœlo et Mundo*. He had thus evidently studied the moral, psychological, and scientific side of Aristotle, rather than the logical, which was then the common one—indeed that alone known to western Europe. He wrote, besides, *Imagines Astronomicæ*, *De Chiromantia*, *De Signis Planetarum*, and several other treatises. The latter part of his life was apparently spent in Scotland. He is said to have survived the death of Alexander III., and to have been one of the ambassadors sent to bring home the Maiden of Norway. If he was born about 1190, these statements are hardly probable. It was more likely his son who was so employed. For long after his death he was held in high repute on the continent among the doctors of the thirteenth century. Roger Bacon, Joannes Picus, Count of Mirandole, and others refer to him in terms of commendation. He figures also in the *Inferno*, among the diviners who had sought illegitimately to wrest the secrets of God, and whose heads

were consequently turned so as to overlook their shoulders. He is described as small about the flanks, and as knowing the play of magic fraud.* Now his least worthy pursuits, exaggerated or imaginary, are those by which alone he is popularly remembered. The traditions which connect him with wizard deeds by the Tweed, and at the Tower of Oakwood, not far from fairy Carterhaugh, are all that represent his life-work. He has passed into the realm of weird imagination; and the ride of William of Deloraine from Branksome to Melrose, the dread opening of the wizard's tomb, and the finding of his "mighty book," are conceptions too powerfully and vividly portrayed ever to give place to a general appreciation of his historical character. His illustrious namesake was not, however, the first to give prominence to his wizard fame, or to surround his name with a weird glamour. In the old ballad, we find that his memory was a source of awe even to the stout-hearted Scottish soldiers of the time of the Stewarts. For the following question is put to the troop who by chance spent a night in the tower where he was born:—

"What gars† ye gaunt,‡ my merrie men a,'
What gars ye look sae eerie,§
What gars ye hing your heids sae sair,
In the Castle o' Balwearie?"

* "Quell' altro che ne' fianchi è così poco,
Michele Scotto fu, che veramente
Delle magiche frode seppe il giuoco."—Cant. XX., 116.

† Makes, causes. ‡ Yawn. § Afraid of the supernatural.

Another mediæval writer, Joannes de Sacrobosco (Halywoode), born in Galloway, learned, we are told by several authorities, his *literas humaniores* among the monks of Candida Casa and Dryburgh. He was the author of several astronomical and arithmetical works—particularly the *De Sphæra Mundi*, for long a text-book in the Scottish Universities in the mediæval period. He is said to have died in 1240, in the time of Alexander II.

But it was chiefly in poetry that the early Border faculty showed itself, from about the time of the War of Independence. There are still extant romances, and fragments of others, which seem to point to the southern Lowlands as their scene, to Borderers as their authors, and to the language prevailing there as that in which they were composed.

The best known name, and that with which a definite work is associated, is that of Thomas of Erceldoune, or Thomas the Rhymour of Erceldoune, or simply Thomas the Rhymour. The historical facts about him are few, and they are mostly given by Sir Walter Scott in his notice of him in the *Minstrelsy*.

Some time in the thirteenth century there lived in a tower to the west of the village of Erceldoune, now Earlston, on the Leader, about two miles from its junction with the Tweed, a personage known as Thomas of Erceldoune. To the east of the village stood a tower or castle of the great Earl of Dunbar—the friend of Thomas, and probably his feudal lord. Erceldoune was then a hamlet in the forest,

and the Earl's castle a hunting-seat, used sometimes by the kings, for royal charters were occasionally dated there. In what year Thomas was born, or when exactly he died, we can only conjecture. But he was witness to un undated charter of Petrus de Haga of Bemersyde, and we may refer it to somewhere between 1162 and 1189. Therein he is named "Thomas Rymor de Ercildune." Then his son and heir (filius et hæres Thomæ Rymour de Ercildoun), in 1299, conveys to the Trinity House of Soltra "all the lands which he held by inheritance (hereditarie tenùi) in the village of Ercildoun." The father was, therefore, probably dead by this time, and he is thus supposed to have lived from 1219 to 1299. This latter date is that printed in the charter as quoted by Sir Walter Scott. Dr. Murray gives it from the Cartulary of the Trinity-House of Soltra in the Advocates' Library as 1294. He thinks, moreover, that the charter of the lands in Erceldoune to Soltra does not imply that the Rhymour himself was already dead, or that these were given by his son. The son and heir of Thomas the Rhymour, mentioned in the charter, might, he conceives, be the Rhymour himself, who possibly now retired from the world to the privacy of a religious life. This supposition is, on the whole, gratuitous. The designation, "son and heir of Thomas Rhymour of Ercildoun," is very specific; and had it been the Rhymour himself who in his lifetime was divesting himself of his property, for such a purpose, there would almost unquestionably have been an express reference

to the purpose in the deed. Then, why should the Rhymour have given his lands to the House of Soltra, when his design was, as is supposed consistently with the narrative of Harry the Minstrel, to retire to the House of Faile, near Ayr? But the designation of the granter, "Thomas de Ercildoun," as opposed to "Thomas Rymour de Ercildoun," is very significant, and points, apart from rebutting evidence, to the son of the Rhymour.

Thomas of Erceldoune was reputed prophet and bard. Even in his lifetime he was regarded as a seer and foreteller of the future. Witness his current prophecy of the death of Alexander III. We have no certain record of any prediction of the Rhymour's in his own words, or in a form that can be referred precisely to his own time. But a MS. of the early part of the fourteenth century—probably before 1320—contains what was said to be one of his predictions, and thus takes us back to a period within thirty years of his death:—

"La Countesse de Dunbar demanda a Thomas de Essedoune quant la guere descoce prendreit fyn, e yl la repoundy e dyt"—

"When man as mad a kyng of a capped man;
When mon is leuere* othermones thyng then is owen;
When loudyonys forest, ant forest ys felde;
When hares kendles† othe herston;‡
When Wyt and Wille werres togedere;

* Comparative of *lief*, willing, *i.e.*, prefers other men's things to his own.
† Litter. ‡ Hearthstone.

When mon makes stables of kyrkes, and steles* castles with styes;
When Rokesbourh nys no burgh ant market is at Forwyleye;
When the alde is gan ant the newe is com that don nocht;
When Bambourne is donged with dedemen;
When men ledes men in ropes to buyen & to sellen;
When a quarter of whaty whete is chaunged for a colt of ten markes;
When prude prikes† & pees‡ is leyd in prisoun;
When a Scot ne may hym hude§ ase hare in forme that the Englysshe ne sal hym fynde;
When rycht ant Wrong ascenteth to gedere;
When laddes‖ weddeth louedis;¶
When Scottes flen so faste, that for faute of ship, hy drowneth hem selue;
Whenne shall this be? Nouther in thine time ne in myne;
Ah comen & gon with inne twenty wynter ant on."

The *Bambourne* of these lines is probably Bannockburn; the Countess of Dunbar is no doubt the wife of the Earl to whom the Rhymour predicted the death of Alexander. These circumstances would take the verses back to very early in the fourteenth century. Like the majority of the most ancient Scottish records in prose or verse, they are in a southern form of English. Is this not a confirmation of the popular tradition regarding the almost universal sweep of Scottish Manuscripts made by Edward I? We have several undoubted southern transcriptions of northern originals. How otherwise were these originals carried southwards?

In his threefold character of poet, prophet, and visitant of a supernatural realm, "another cuntree," known afterwards

* Place, set. † Pride rides on horseback. ‡ Peace. § Hide.
‖ Youthful male servants. ¶ Ladies, daughters of the Laird or Baron.

as the land of Faërie, Thomas appears in that ancient and interesting poem, or series of poems, preserved for us in its best form in the Thornton MS. in the Library of Lincoln Cathedral. This was transcribed, we are told, by Robert Thornton of East Newton, Yorkshire, about 1430-40.* Fytte I. represents the ancient tradition of his communings with the Queen of Faërie, and his visit to her mysterious land. Fyttes II. and III. record the prophetic utterances which he learnt from the Queen. The poems show a pretty frequent exchange of the third and first persons in the course of the narrative. The transitions from the one to the other are generally very abrupt. This circumstance may very readily be explained by supposing that we have an original poem, probably by the Rhymour himself, made the basis of subsequent elaborations. This view is confirmed by the fact that the version preserved by the Thornton MS. is a southern one, with obvious signs of being a transmutation of an earlier northern original.

The prophecies attributed to Thomas are "in figures," dark (derne), and obscure, as is the fashion with the oracular. They have also a strange feeling of gloom about them, and are strongly marked by a foreboding of danger, violence, and bloodshed. This comes out especially in the later ones with which he is credited:—

> "At Threeburn Grange,† in an after day,
> There shall be a lang and bloody fray;

* See Murray, *Thomas of Erceldoune*, p. lvi.

† *Grains*, branches of a burn towards the head.

Where a three thumbed knight by the reins shall hald
Three Kings' horses, baith stout and bauld,
And the Three Burns three days shall rin
Wi' the blude o' the slain that fa' therein."

Again :—

"Atween Craik Cross and Eildon-tree,
Is a' the safety there shall be."

The oldest have in many cases a quite distinct Arthurian tinge and cast. They are, indeed, exactly what was to be expected from one who lived in the period of the Rhymour, who was a strong patriotic Scot, who survived the death of Alexander, and was shrewd enough to discern the grasping ambition of the English King, and whose memory and imagination were full of the old Arthurian legends of the Lowlands. Such a man could not but see that the traditional oppression of the ancient Britons was about to be repeated on their Saxon successors; he believed and hoped in a final deliverance; and he readily adapted to the circumstances of his own time the floating legends of Cymric sufferings, temporary deliverance, and at least unsubdued hopes.

There can be no doubt that subsequently to the time of Erceldoune, and during the whole course of the wars with England, it was common to form predictions in his name, either before or after the event narrated. The motive of this was to strengthen the conviction of the Rhymour's inspiration, and, while the event was still future,

to determine, as far as possible, its occurrence. The prophetic utterances of the Rhymour are referred to by Barbour in *The Bruce*, about 1375; by Wyntoun in his *Cronykill of Scotland*, which was finished about 1424; and in the *Scalachronica* of Sir Thomas Grey, Constable of Norham, in 1355. Henry the Minstrel also alludes to him and his prophetic powers in connection with the recovery of Wallace from apparent death at Ayr. However we may look on those broken and fragmentary rhymes, there can be no doubt that during the first and second Wars of Independence, and during even the later struggles of Scottish story, those predictions, real or mythical, based on the authority of the Rhymour, cheered the hearts of the Scottish peasant soldiers on the morn of many a well-fought field—whether prosperous as at Bannockburn, or disastrous to their country as at Halidon, Flodden, and Pinkie.

But the communings of the Seer of Erceldoune with the Queen of Fairy, and his mysterious visitations of Fairyland, are the points that bring him home to the imagination as both historical and ideal. A man of power which the intelligence of the people of the time could not explain, must necessarily be connected by them with that supernatural world, in which they firmly believed. That Thomas drew his strength of prophecy and of poetry from some mysterious communion with spiritual forms and personalities was the most rational and the most plausible view of the age. Hence the explanation of his absence from

home by supposing him to be in Fairyland, from which he came back wise and sad, and readily obedient to a higher call, burdened with a mystery of knowledge and experience, the full import of which he could only darkly reveal to the dwellers on "middle-erd." We can see in him, as he lived, an obvious awakening to the powers of outward nature, the feeling of the spring-tide and the rejoicing birds, the love of lonely lingering among the hills, the sense of the unspeakable silence and solitude of the benty moorland, and the poetic yearning for some form of a mysterious life with which he might commune on the wild. Thomas of Erceldoune was the man of the time who felt these influences, and doubtless expressed them, more powerfully than any other. The mythical story of his intercourse and selection by the Queen of Faërie was the imaginative embodiment in a free, wild, and graceful form of the Rhymour as he appeared to the people around him—the theory of his somewhat mysterious life.

What can be finer or more true to the feeling for nature than these lines:—

> "In a mery mornynge of Maye,
> By Huntle bankkes my selfe allone,
> I herde the jaye and the throstylle cokke,
> The mawys menyde* hir of hir songe,
> The wodewale† beryde as a belle,

* Gave forth a plaintive note. So—

> "The mellow mavis that hails the night fa'."

† Wood-lark.

That all the wode a-bowte me ronge.
Allone in longynge* als I laye,
Undyre-nethe a semely tree,
[I was war of a lady gay,
Come rydyng owyr a fayre le.]"

The vision which breaks on the eye of his solitude is the huntress of the wild uplands, fair as "the sonne on someres day":—

"I ryde after this wyld fee,†
My raches‡ rynnys at my devyse.

And she passes freely, light of heart:—

"A whylle scho blewe, another scho sange."

Some grossness is mingled with the conception, just because there was a fair ideal conceived, not purely, but with difficulty, in a rude and coarse age.

But, in the poetic fragments connected with the Rhymour, not only is there a feeling for the softer side of natural beauty: there is obviously a sense, and an aesthetic one, of the wilder side,—of the dark recesses of the mountain, and of the mysterious caverns among the moors. These the Saxon imagination had peopled with fierce and unlovely shapes for ages before. This finds its highest and best expression in Beowulf, and in the powers of evil dwelling

* For "longynge" the Lansdowne MS. has "a loning," which is probably correct, meaning grass field, where cows pasture.

† Beasts, especially deer, A. S. *feoh*. ‡ Deer-hounds that follow by scent.

in solitary meres and places, which he assailed and overcame. The Rhymour was destined to make his journey in the dark ways, by the foundations of the hills and the deep sources of the springs, and to do it in company with one who, unlike the forms of the older faith, possessed something of the weakness and the tenderness of humanity. This dark passage underneath the Eildons is given with a Homeric simplicity and grandeur:—

"Scho ledde hym in at Eldone hille,
Undir-nethe a derne* lee;
Whan it was dirke als mydnyght myrke,
And euer the water tille his knee.
The montenans† of dayes three
He herd bot swoghynge‡ of the flode.
At the laste, he sayde, 'fulle wa' es mee!
Almoste I dye, for fawte§ of fode."

The "mountane graye" and the "benttis browne" of the following lines, anticipate the feeling that is to be found in the subsequent Ballads of the Border:—

"Scho broghte hym agayne to Eldone tree,
Under-nethe that grenewode spraye,
In Huntlee bannkes es mery to bee,
Where fowles synges bothe nyght and daye.
'Fferre owtt in yone mountane graye,
Thomas, my fawkone bygges a neste;
A fawconne es an Erlis‖ praye,

* Dark, or secret. † Duration. ‡ Soughing, pulsing, as of moving water.
§ French *faute*, want.

‖ For "Erlis" the Lansdowne MS. reads "the heron's," and the Cambridge "an yrons," that is, "erne's."

Fforthi in na place may he reste.
Ffare wele, Thomas, I wend my waye,
For me by-houys* ouer thir benttis† browne.'"

And so she passed away into the solitude of the moorland.

The mysterious connection which the Rhymour had formed with the land of Faërie, was fated to control his life and destiny. According to the popular feeling, he lived having in his heart the expectation of a call awaiting him from the invisible. And so, when he feasted with his friends in that grey tower to the west of the thatch-covered hamlet of Erceldoune, and heard that a hart and a hind, the most timid and gentle creatures of the wilds, calmly paced through the village, he rose obedient to the call; and as one upon whom fate had laid a mild yet overpowering hand, he passed away with them into the darkness of the forest that fringed his tower, never again to be spoken to on earth. Yet if we may freely interpret the references to him in popular poetry, after his disappearance, we may suppose that his form was not unknown on the spaces of the pastoral uplands of the Borders. One line records him as

"The busteous beirne on the bent,"

or huge man on the benty moorland.‡ And in the old

* Behoves. † The common hair grass of the southern hills.

‡ So Harry the Minstrel—

"But boustous noise so brymly blew and fast."

This refers to the spectral scene in Gask Hall. *Boustous* is here violent, powerful, great in degree. Gothic, *busca*. *Brymly* is fiercely.

"Prophisies of Rhymour, Beid, and Marlyng," collected from about 1515 to 1525—with which Sir David Lyndesay amused and imbued the youthful fancy of James the Fifth—we have the following stanza:—

> "Well on my way as I forthe wente
> Over a londe beside a lee,
> I met with a baron upon a bente,
> Me thought him semely for to see."

Thus it was that for long the impassioned eye of the traveller on the moor would descry the form of the Rhymour as a spiritual vision, amid the scenes which he had most loved on earth, and where it would be most appropriate he should spend his immortality, or at least vouchsafe his presence to any prophetic patriot.

Our main historical interest in Thomas of Erceldoune is his supposed authorship of the Romance of *Sir Tristrem*, which is regarded by some as the oldest Scottish romantic poem, and the introduction thus into Scotland of an epoch of romantic minstrelsy which lasted for at least a century and a half. This famous poem, as we now have it, was discovered by Ritson in the Auchinleck MS. in 1744. It appears to have been transcribed towards the middle of the fourteenth century. It was first edited and annotated by Sir Walter Scott.

Sir Walter's view of the authorship is that Sir Tristrem was the production of Thomas of Erceldoune, and that it

was composed by him probably in 1250. He further maintains that this vernacular poem was written by Thomas directly from the British traditions which had been handed down in the Lowlands from the Cymric people of Strathclyde; and that it was the original and prolific source of the subsequent French and German romances regarding Sir Tristrem. If this were so, it would follow that Sir Tristrem is one of the very earliest works in *Inglis* which exists, and that the use of the vernacular at the Court of Scotland, then resident almost entirely in the south-eastern Lowlands, was greatly earlier than in England, where Norman-French language, influence, and usages prevailed. As Mr. Ellis says:—"Our ancestors appear to be indebted to a Scottish poet for the earliest model of a pure English style."*

The evidence for the side of Erceldoune's authorship of Sir Tristrem cannot be regarded as perfectly conclusive. There are the oft quoted lines of Robert Mannyng or Robert de Brunne in his Chronicle of 1303:—

> "I see in song, in sedgeyng tale
> Of Erceldoune, and of Kendale,
> Non tham says as thai tham wroght,
> And in ther saying it seems noght.
> That may thou here in Sir Tristrem;
> Ouer gestes it has the 'steem,
> Ouer all that is or was,
> If men it sayd as made Thomas."

* *Specimens of Early English Poetry*, I., 184.

These lines may be held as attributing Sir Tristrem to Thomas of Erceldoune, but they admit of other applications. In the poem itself there is stronger evidence of his connection with the work. The copy of the romance we have is, no doubt, a southern version of the northern original. But there is very explicit reference to Thomas of Erceldoune as at least the source whence the poem was derived:—

"I was at [Ertheldoune],
With Tomas spak Y thare,
Ther herd Y rede in roune
Who Tristrem gat and bare,
Who was king with croun,
And who him fostered zare,
And who was bald baroun
As thai elders ware
Bi zere,
Thomas telles in toun
This auentours as thai ware."

There are other references of the same kind in the course of the poem. It would not be a great stretch of presumption to hold that this third form of narrative had been adopted by Thomas himself as author, instead of speaking in the first person. But the probability, on the whole, is that this southern version, obviously founded on a northern poem, refers correctly enough to the northern original, and that this, now lost, was the production of Thomas of Erceldoune. Thus far we may go. But Sir Walter Scott does not appear to have made out that the Sir Tristrem of the Auchinleck

MS. is an original composition, or even the transmuted copy of what was an original production by Thomas of Erceldoune, much less that this was the source of the continental romances on the same theme. There can be no doubt that, besides the Welsh traditions regarding Tristrem and Yssilt (the Welsh for Ysonde), he, his exploits, and his adventurous love had formed the subject of Armorican poems and French Romances before the time of Erceldoune. And Scott is almost certainly wrong, as Price maintains he is, in identifying Thomas of Erceldoune with Thomas of Brittany. The latter lived long before the time of Erceldoune, about the year 1200. He was probably an Armorican. He seems at least to have had access to British books or sources of information in Cornwall and Armorica, and to have rendered these into Norman-French, and, it may be, into Latin. He was obviously the great predecessor of the Continental romancists; and, among other tales, left a version of Sir Tristrem. There was no doubt a French prose *Sir Tristan* about 1170. The Sir Tristrem of Erceldoune, supposing him to be the author, was thus not an original composition, but a rendering into "quante Inglis" of a foreign model. It cannot, therefore, be regarded as the source of the continental romances of Sir Tristrem. It is simply, directly or indirectly, an offshoot of these.

But that the version supposed to be that of Erceldoune was even taken from the French is by no means certain. Very possibly it had another and intermediate origin. Mr.

Price has quoted an authority for the fact that there is an Icelandic version of Sir Tristrem of very ancient date.* This was a translation executed by order of King Hacon in 1226. The order of the English poem is almost identical with that of the Icelandic. We may thus suppose either that both versions, Icelandic and English, were taken from a common source, French or Celtic, or that the English version—the "quante Inglis"—of Erceldoune was made from the Icelandic. I think the latter an exceedingly probable supposition. The Scandinavian element was so strong in the Lowlands, and the community of feeling on many points so great, that an author was likely to look to the northern sources for the forms of romances which had had their local origin even in the Lowland district itself. No doubt at this period the Lowlands were indebted to Scandinavian sources both for legend and song. The local influence and tradition probably turned the attention of Erceldoune to the Icelandic poem, and led him to transform it into the vernacular.

But, even if we suppose the author of the vernacular *Sir Tristrem* to have been indebted for the story to a foreign model, we need not altogether throw out of account local influences. When we consider that Erceldoune lived on the very borders of the ancient Cymric Kingdom, at a period when distance from the time of the historic events would lead living memory to clothe them with the interest of the mythic and the ideal, it

* Warton, *History of English Poetry*, I., p. 197. Note.

is quite probable that he may have been drawn to his theme at least, through surrounding local tradition. Tristrem came down in Cymric story, not only as a famous warrior, but as musician and poet. He is credited, too, with the constitution of the rules of the mediæval science of hunting—wode-craft. He was associated with the times and the Court of Arthur. As "Tristan mab Tallwich," he was held a disciple of Merddin or Merlin, a name intimately connected with Strathclyde, and naturally well known to Thomas of Erceldoune—a name, moreover, to be afterwards associated with his own as prophet and bard all down the stream of Scottish story. Tristrem is mentioned, also, along with Llywarch Hen, who was the contemporary and friend of Urien Reged, and the bard of his exploits. All these things bring Tristrem very close to the home of Erceldoune—at a time, too, when the Cymric race had not been absolutely amalgamated with the intruding Saxon, and the Cymric language might still be spoken by the residue of the people who yet bore the name of the Bretts, and who dwelt high up on the wild watersheds of the Teviot, the Ettrick, and the Tweed.

It is no uncommon thing to find contemporary poetic interest centred in the same theme. Every cultured and susceptible minstrel of the thirteenth century, whether at the court of England, of France, or Germany, or even in remote Iceland, was prompted to deal with some part of the

circle of Arthurian legend. *Sir Tristrem*, as a poem, has precisely the characters which might have been looked for in a romance written in the Lowlands of Scotland in the thirteenth century. The peculiar Cymric feeling for nature and natural objects, so marked in the ancient books of the Bards of Wales and Strathclyde, has almost disappeared. The interest of the poem lies entirely in story and incident, and the variations that may be played on the chord of illicit and adventurous love. There are conditions of strong emotion, and the concluding scene of all, supplied by Scott from the French fragment, where Ysonde reaches the shore of Armorica, hears that her well-loved knight is lying stretched "as stone so cold," passes rapidly into the presence of death, and throws herself down upon the bier in a passionate expiring embrace, is finely and pathetically conceived and told. There is, perhaps, a touch of the Celtic feeling in attributing the passionate and irresistible attraction of Tristrem and Ysonde for each other to the power of the love potion. This seems to symbolise that sense of overmastering fate and destiny, that yielding to the supernatural and impersonal, which the Cymri felt as around and above them, and whose all-controlling power they could only bewail. It is this artistic touch in the poem which softens the reader's feeling of personal demerit in the actors. But the poem is Saxon throughout in its interest founded on action. We miss the meditative sympathy with the sterner side of nature of the earlier Cymric poems. The second

stanza at once tells us that we are in a new world of feeling:—

"This semly somers day
In winter it is nought sen;
This greves* wexen all gray,
That in her time were grene:
So dos this world Y say,
Y wis and nought atwene;
The gode bene al oway,
That our elders haue bene,
To abide:—
Of a knight is that Y mene;
His name is sprong wel wide."

Scott, in a note on this passage, points out that "an ancient poem preserved in the Cotton Library opens with a similar piece of morality":—

"Winter wakneth al my care,
Now this leves waxeth bare.
Oft Y sike and mourne sair,
When hit cometh in my thoht,
Of this worldis joie how hit goth all to nouht.
Now hit is, and now hit nis,
Als tho hit ner nere Y wis."†

It is not at all impossible that the corresponding lines in *Sir Tristrem* are an interpolation of some reciter subsequent to the time of Erceldoune. But there can be no doubt that these first four lines of the poem are Saxon all through, and Lowland Scotch in feeling to the core. We have the

* Probably *groves*.

† *Minstrelsy*, v., p. 371.

key-note of the regret for the passing summer, and the shivering feeling for winter, which runs through the whole of Scotch mediæval poetry and well down to our own time. These, at least, could hardly be borrowed from a French Romance.

Sir Walter Scott has referred to certain other compositions as belonging to this period, and as relating to the Border or Lowlands of Scotland. He regards the two romances of *Golagros and Gawane*, and *Galoran of Galloway*,* as of this character, and as compositions prior to the end of the thirteenth century. They are characterised in his view by an absence of French words, common enough after the time of Robert Bruce, because of the closer union with France. They contain also allusions to the possession of parts of Scotland by British tribes.

There is also the *History of Sir Edgar and Sir Grime*, the scene of which is laid in Carrick in Ayrshire. *Hornchild* is another romance of the same order. The scene of it is laid in Northumbria. The names of persons and places in it are purely Saxon, and there is no allusion to Norman names or manners. Then there is the romance of *Wade*, which is twice alluded to by Chaucer. Wade's Castle was near, in fact on, the southern Roman Wall. Sir Walter is even inclined to regard this, though probably on insuf-

* This must refer to *Sir Gawan and Sir Galoran of Galloway*, incorrectly printed by Pinkerton—*Scottish Poems*, III., 197 (1792). It appears in Sir Frederic Madden's Collection as the *Awntyrs of Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*, printed from the Lincoln MS.

ficent grounds, as the production of the author of *Sir Tristrem*, Thomas of Erceldoune.*

Sir Frederic Madden, on the other hand, holds that there is no existing Scottish romance poem which can be referred to an earlier date than the last half of the fourteenth century. He disputes the claim to the authorship of *Sir Tristrem* put forward on behalf of Thomas the Rhymour. He maintains that the earliest Scottish romantic poem, or indeed continuous composition in verse of any sort, is that entitled *Syr Gawayn and the Grene Knyght*, and this he ascribes to the time of Richard II. (1377-99). This is the central romance of the Scottish group. The other principal poems, also referring to Gawayn, are *The Awntyrs of Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*, and *Golagros and Gawaine*. These he ascribes to the fifteenth century. With regard to the authorship of those poems, Madden attributes *Syr Gawayn and the Grene Knyght* to the personage dimly known as Huchowne of the *Awle Ryale* (Royal Palace), who probably composed the poem before Barbour finished *The Bruce*, which was between 1370-80. Wyntoun, who was made Prior of St. Serf's, Lochleven, in 1395, thus refers to Huchowne in a well known passage :—

"Huchowne
That cunnand† wes in literature ;
He made the Gret Gest of Arthure,
And the Awntyre of Gawane,

* *Minstrelsy*, v., p. 57 *et seq.* † Skilful.

The Pystyl als of swete Susane,
He wes curyws in hys style,
Fayre of facund,* and subtile,
And ay to plesans and delyte
Made in metyre mete his dyte†."

The other two poems, *The Awntyrs of Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne*, and *Gologras and Gawane*, Madden regards, from similarity in style, stanza, and subject, as by one author, but not the work of Huchowne. They belong also to a later date—the fifteenth century, and are due to Clerk of Tranent, mentioned by Dunbar in his *Lament for the Deth of the Makkaris*:—

"Clerk of Tranent, eke he has tane,
That made the *Awnteris of Gawane*."

This of course supposes that the *Awnteris of Gawane* of Dunbar's reference are identical with the *Awntyrs of Arthure;* while the *Awntyre of Gawane*, attributed by Wyntoun to Huchowne, is the same as *Syr Gawayn and the Grene Knyght.* Among the other romances and ballads of this cycle are *Syre Gawene and the Carle of Carelyle, The Jeaste of Syr Gawane, King Arthur and the King of Cornwall, Marriage of Sir Gawaine.* These were not, however, written exclusively by Scottish authors,‡ and are

* Speech. † Writing.

‡ Compare *Syr Gawayne*, a Collection of Ancient Romance Poems, by Scotch and English Authors, by Sir Frederic Madden. 1839.

probably of later date than the three main poems just mentioned.

Sir Frederic Madden further holds that Sir Walter Scott and others are wrong in ascribing the origin or materials of those poems to local floating Celtic traditions. They are versions more or less changed and embellished by their authors of the Norman-French Romances. *Sir Gawayn and the Grene Knyght* is based on the *Roman de Perceval* of Christien de Troyes, who wrote between 1170 and 1195.* Madden has not been able to point to the Norman-French prototype of the second romance—*The Awntyrs of Arthure.* He refers the first part of it to a Latin legend of the middle ages. The entire outline of *Golagros and Gawaine* is, according to him, borrowed from the *Roman de Perceval.*

With regard to the Romance of *Hornchilde,* the scene of which is laid in Northumbria, the question is as to the priority of the French or English form of it. The *Roman du Roi Horn* is the work of one who names himself *Mestre Thomas,* and it is referred to the latter half of the twelfth century. Ritson and De la Rue regard it as the original of the English poem on the same subject. But the English *Horn Childe,* or *Geste of Kyng Horn,* has been held by Percy, Warton, Wright, and Madden as the earlier of the two.† It seems, in fact, to go back to a date very near

* *Syr Gawayne,* p. 305.

† Compare Craik, *English Literature and Language,* I., p. 124.

the conquest. Hornchilde was well known to Chaucer, and in repute in his day:—

> "Men speken of romances of price,
> Of Hornchilde and Ippotis,
> Of Bevis and Sir Guy."

The general sources of the romantic poems of Britain, relating to the Arthurian cycle, are, according to Madden, the prose romances which follow:—1. The *Roman du Saint Graal*, sometimes entitled the *Roman de Joseph d'Arimathie*, composed by Robert de Borron. 2. The *Roman de Merlin*, by the same. 3. The *Roman de Lancelot du Lac*, by Walter Map, who wrote in the time of Richard I. (1189-1199), and who died about 1210. 4. The *Roman du Quête du Saint Graal*, by the same. 5. The *Roman de la Morte Artus*, by the same. 6. The first portion of the *Roman de Tristan*, by Luces, Seigneur de Gast, in the time of Henry II. (1154-1189). 7. The conclusion of *Tristan* by Helie de Borron, in the time of Henry III. (1216-1272). 8. The *Roman de Gyron le Courtois*, by the same. "Of these the first six were written in the latter half of the twelfth century; the remainder in the first half of the thirteenth, that is, in the course of one hundred years. To these must be added the metrical romances of Chrestien de Troyes, composed between 1170 and 1195, as also the later prose compositions of Rusticien de Pise and his followers in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries."*

* *Syr Gawayne*, Introd., p. x.

We may admit that Madden has shown in several cases the Anglo-French original of the Scottish romances, but he has failed in other particulars to complete his theory of an absolutely foreign derivation of the whole. He has not given sufficient prominence to the origin of those Norman-French romances themselves, which are the embodiment and the embellishment of Celtic, in fact Welsh, Cornish, and Armorican traditions. These traditions were common to the whole Cymric race—to the Cymri of Strathclyde and to those of Cornwall and Armorica. It was on the Continent, no doubt, that the reminiscences of the old history were, for the most part, idealised and worked into romantic form—first of all by Celtic hands, and then by the Norman-French writers. But it is very probable that the original Cymric tales and traditions were known and cherished in what was once the Cymric Kingdom of Strathclyde. And it is not at all unlikely that, in this northern Cymric district, even the elaborated forms of those traditions by the bards of Armorica and Wales were popularly known. The History of Geoffrey of Monmouth, finished in 1138, at least twenty years before the known date of a single Anglo-Norman romance of the Arthurian type, contained the germs of nearly all of them, and was, in fact, the Latin embodiment of Cymric traditions. These were wide-spread and powerful, even in Britain, and were exceedingly likely to inspire poetic feeling and effort. The translations of Wace and Layamon, with the additions by the latter obviously made

from Welsh sources, show the stream of impulse in Britain. The constant reference of the romance writers to Latin originals certainly suggests the probability of a much larger body of romance in that language than is commonly admitted. It was entirely the policy of Henry II. and the Plantagenet kings to bury their novel and forcible acquisition of the English throne in the tradition of their descent from a remote British antiquity—to serve themselves heirs, in fact, to the dynasty that held the throne prior to Harold and his kin. The constant repetition of the statement that Henry deposited Latin books in monasteries, containing the old tales and stories, shows at least that these were existent, common, and popular.

The internal evidence in the case of certain of the recognized Scottish romances seems to point to a native origin. The principal figure in these — Gawayn — has both a historical and mythical connection with the Scottish Lowlands, and with Cumberland — the southern part of the Cymric Kingdom of Strathclyde. In the earlier course of the story that gradually gathered around him, he fits in with the historical circumstances. He is the eldest son of Loth, King of the Lothians, by Anna, the half-sister of Arthur. Along with his two brothers he assists Arthur in his war against the Saxons. He is made by Arthur Lord of Galloway. He is the friend of the Caledonian Merlin, and in the later form of the abstraction of Merlin from earth within the four-walled tower of air, rendered

adamantine by enchantment, in the forest of Broceliande, it is on the ear of Gawayn, while searching for the lost wizard, that there falls the voice of Merlin, asking the knight to seek him no more among living men.

In the *Awntyrs of Arthure* the adventures of Gawayn are associated with the localities of Strathclyde, including Carlisle and Cumberland, with its Forest of Inglewood, and Tarn of Wathelyne, the modern Wadling, said now to be meadow-land.

In reply to Arthur, a knight, whom he meets in the forest of Inglewood, at the Terne Wathelyne, is made to say:—

"My name is Sir Galleroune, with owttyne any gyle;
The gretteste of Galowaye, of greves* and of gyllis,†
Of Konynge,‡ of Carryke, of Conyngame, of Kylle,
Of Lomonde, of Lenay,§ of Lowthyane hillis:
Thou hase wonnen thaym one werre, with owttrageouse wille,
And gyffene thame Sir Gawayne, and that myne herte grilles.
But he shal wring his honde, and warry‖ the wyle,
Or he weldene my landes, at myne unthankes.
By alle the welthe of this werlde, he salle thame neuer welde,
Whilles I my hede may bere;
But he wyne thame one werre,
Bothe with schelde, and with spere,
Appone a fair felde!"¶

After the knights, Sir Galeron and Sir Gawayn, had fought, and both been badly wounded, the king says:—

"'I gyffe to thee, Sir Gawayne,' quode the kynge, 'tresoure and golde,

* Woods. † Probably glens. ‡ Other reading, Connok, *i. e.*, Cumnock.
§ Other reading, Losex, better Lenaux, *i.e.*, Lennox.
‖ Curse. ¶ Stanza xxxiii.

Glamorgan's landis, withe greuys so grene;
The wirchipe of Wales, to welde and to wolde,
Withe Griffons Castle, kirnelde* so clene;
And the Huster's Haulle, to hafe, and to holde
Wayfurthe and Wakfelde, wallede, I wene.'

* * * * * * *

'Now, and here I gyffe hym,' quod Gawayne, 'with owttyne ony gyle,
Alle the landes, and the lythes, fra Lowyke† to Layre;
Commoke, and Carrike, Conyghame, and Kylle,
Als the cheualrous knyghte hase chalandchede als ayere,
The Lebynge, the Lowpynge, the Leveastre Ile,‡
Bathe frythes,§ and forestes, frely and faire,
Under your lordship to lenge the while,
And to the Rounde Table to make repaire;
I shal reseff him in felde, in foreste so fair.'
Than the kynge and the quene,
And alle the doghety by-dene,
Thorow the greuys so grene,
To Carlele thay kayre."||

Further, the names of the knights mentioned in the *Awntyrs of Arthure*, are unmistakeably of northern origin. We have:—

"Sir Owayne fytz-Vryene, and Arrake fitz-Lake,
Marrake,¶ and Menegalle* that maste were of myghte."

* Embattled. † Other reading, Lauer.

‡ Other reading—

"The Lother, the Lemmok, the Loynak, the Lyle."

Lother is probably Lowther.

§ Enclosed woods. || Stanzas lii., liii.

¶ Other readings, Sir Drurelat. * Moylard.

Owan, son of Urien, is one of the best-known personages of early Cymric history in Strathclyde. Arrake, otherwise Errake, we may have in Erickstane, probably his grave, at the watershed between the Annan and the Tweed. Near it Erickle, or Erickhill, grandly towers above the mounds that cover the historic castle of Fruid. Marrake, otherwise Mewrike, may be represented in Merrick, near Loch Doon. Menegalle may, as Madden conjectures, be for Menyduke. It is not unlikely the original of Minnigaff.

Is it at all probable that these names and references to localities were borrowed from a foreign original? In this case, must they not have been Normanised? How much, then, of the story are we to attribute to the foreign source, to local tradition, and to individual invention? Why should we suppose that the local and historical scene of the original actors had nothing absolutely or directly to do with the subsequent traditions and idealised memories?

But, whatever be the origin of those early Scottish Romantic poems—whether they were transcripts from the French, or whether they were, at least in some cases, directly inspired by local tradition and transmitted incident, or whether, as is most likely, the French version was known and liked because it chimed in with local belief and sympathy, and thus took a local colour and individualism in the rendering—this, at least, is true, that these romances may be taken as representing the poetry of the Lowlands in the fourteenth, and part of the fifteenth centuries. It

is thus of extreme interest to us to know thoroughly what the form of poetic feeling in those remote days was—what its tone, its general character, and specific features.

The character and subjects of these romantic poems could not be better put than in the words of the ancient translation of Marie's *Lai le Freine*, in the Auchinleck MS. :—

"We redeth oft and findeth y-write,
And this clerkes wele it wite*,
Layes that ben in harping,
Ben y-founde of ferli† thing :
Sum bethe of wer, and sum of wo,
Sum of joie and mirthe also,
And sum of trecherie and gile,
Of old auentours that fel while ;
And sum of bourdes‡ and ribaudy,
And many ther beth of fairy ;
Of al thinges that men seth,
Maist o loue forsothe thai beth." §

Action intensely felt and vividly portrayed, the strong sense of physical vigour and manliness as the ground and title of honourable place and property in the world, a readiness to recognise those qualities in others as a bond of social equality, a chivalrous sense of truth and honour in speech and deed, these, intermixed with but a low sense of sexual morality, and with but little conception of anything beyond immediate success and temporal prosperity, are the

* Know. † Wonderful. ‡ Jests.

§ Weber, *Metrical Romances*, I., 357.

good and the bad elements of those early romances. Yet how clear and ready is the action, how emphatic the sense in every case of the need of personal vindication when challenged, how great and noble the feeling of human personality, as a thing to be preserved at all costs, not to be tainted by untruthfulness, unmanliness, or cowardice. A limited ideal it was perhaps, yet grand in the noble efforts it evoked, grand in the power of will it constrained, and in the sense of voluntary subjection to the law and order of the times which it involved. And its reward is so ready. Merit never waits long for its recompense, or demerit for its retribution. The simple manners of the times point instinctively to a King who has all and instantaneous power to crown the hero, and to hang the blackguard. The King is supposed to be absolute overlord of endless unoccupied property, and to be promptly under a sense of kingly justice, ready to bestow it on the man who has earned it. The coward is at once branded by the popular consent, and the criminal hardly appears even to receive the sentence of justice, which is, without much ado, enacted upon him. All is simple, direct, and intuitional in morals and action. Photographic, realistic, to us painfully so, are the traces of conflict and combat, literal as those of the Homeric heroes. Queens, the ideal women of the time, witness them, and occasionaly shriek and swoon, yet this is but the clear carrying out of the conception which is at the root of the whole life of the times. If personal conflict and

the flash of skilled arms be the highest ideal of life, why should it be carried out in a corner; why should it be hid from the scrutiny, and, it may be, the sympathy or the revulsion of the highest feminine tenderness? If womanly instinct sympathizes with it, it is well, or it may be so for a time; if it revolts from it, then let us consider the truth and morality of the ideal. Perhaps it was this latter power of womanly feeling which so worked through the ages, that deeds done in honour of these very women themselves, at their instigation and under their applause, came in the end to be felt by them as the mere husks of tribute to their charms, as little higher than the conflicts of savage animals for a mate, until at length feminine tenderness frowned on useless bloodshed, and led men to value life as more than a thing that might exhibit itself in its highest ideal as a pageant of tournament or as a splendid risk of duel.

Some touches there are of a gentler sort than the stern action portrayed. The free joyous out-door life is finely pictured here:—

"Thus refreschit he his folk, in grete fusioun,
With outin wanting in waill,* wastell,† or wyne;
Thai turssit‡ up tentis, and turnit of toun,
The roy with his Round Tabill, richest of ryne.§
They drave on the da|| deir, be dalis and doun,
And of the nobillest be-name,¶ noumerit of nyne;

* Abundance of choice. † Finebread. ‡ Trussed, packed.
§ Territory, kingdom. || Doe. ¶ Took.

Quhen it drew to the dirk nycht, and the day yeid* doun,
Thai plantit doun pauillonis, proudly fra thine.†
Thus journait gentilly thyr cheualrouse knichtis,
Ithandly‡ ilk day,
Throu mony fer contray,
Our the mountains gay,
Holtis§ and hillis."

—Stanza xviii., *Golagros and Gawane.*

In the *Awntyrs of Arthure* there is obvious feeling of the beauty of the softer aspects of nature. Thus we find in the opening stanza one or two delicate touches:—

"In Kyng Arthure tyme, ane awntir by-tyde,
By the Terne Wathelyne, als the buke tellis,
Als he to Carelele was commene, that conqueroure kyde,‖
Withe dukes and with ducheperes,¶ that with that dere duellys,
For to hunnte at the herdys, that lange hase been hyde;
And one a day thay tham dighte to the depe dellis,
To felle of the femmales, in the foreste wele frythede,
Faire in the fernysone* tyme, by frythis† and fellis‡."

—Stanza i.

We have here a fine line—

"And by the stremys so strange that swyftly swoghes§."

—Stanza v.

The early romantic school of Scottish poetry, chiefly

* Went. † Thence. ‡ Diligently. § Forests.
‖ Renowned. ¶ Douze-pairs, as in France.

* Said to mean the close time in hunting, when the male deer were not allowed to be killed.

† Enclosed wood. ‡ Hill, moor, better stretch of high moorland.
§ Soughs.

carried on by Huchowne of the Awle Ryale, may be said to have terminated with Clerk of Tranent in the fifteenth century. The poems, no doubt, continued to be read, at least by the higher classes, down to near the Reformation. James III. had, for example, a copy of the *Gesta de Gowane*, and one of the earliest works printed by the Scottish press, in 1508, was *The Knyghtly Tale of Golagrus and Gawene*, by Chepman and Millar. But the splendid struggles of the two national heroes, Wallace and Bruce, early absorbed the popular attention and admiration, awakened the interest of the native minstrels, and drew them to home themes, just as Charlemagne and his Paladins gradually banished from the Court of France the tales of Arthur and his companions. Out of the new material grew the first Scottish Epic, *The Bruce* of Barbour, in the reign of Robert II., and the *Wallace* of Henry the Minstrel fully a century later, probably in 1460. Not only did the Arthurian themes cease to be the subjects of the longer Scotch poems; they were not even preserved in the ballad poetry of the country. There is no distinctively Scotch ballad which has expressly Arthur or any of his knights for its subject. We have, no doubt, now and again what is obviously a transformation of an Arthurian story into modern incident and actors—as in the case of *Burd Ellen* given by Jamieson, the same as the *Child Waters* of the south of the Border. These are plainly modernised versions of the *Lai le Freine*, given in English in the Auchinleck MS., and in Norman-French in the *Lais* of

Marie, about 1250. The *King Henrie*, too, of Scott's *Minstrelsy*, is probably a transformation of the *Marriage of Sir Gawaine*, though Scott refers the story ultimately to the Icelandic. But the historical ballads, which form the great mass of the *Minstrelsy*, refer almost universally to Scottish actors and incidents—so thoroughly did these take a hold of the popular imagination. There is probably an unconscious influence from the romance period in the ballads that refer to supernatural powers, and in the class called "Romantic." But the superstitions and the myths became so thoroughly localised that all trace of their origin was unknown to those who were so deeply moved by them. The Saxons south of the Border retained in more instances, and more directly, the Arthurian themes—as in *The Boy and the Mantle*, *Sir Lancelot du Lake*, *King Ryence's Challenge*, *King Arthur's Death*, *Legend of King Arthur*, etc. These are distinctly localised in England; they are English in diction; and some of them are obviously fragments of the old English romances, while others, especially *Sir Lancelot du Lake*, and in great measure *King Ryence's Challenge*, are copied from the late *Morte Arthur*. In the Lowlands of Scotland, on the other hand, the allusions in the popular poetry to what were the prevailing topics of the early minstrelsy are few, slight, and indistinct. The names of localities alone, given in the pre-historic period, have faintly preserved, through the reigns of the Stewarts to our own times, the memory of Arthur and his

associates in the district in which he had lived and fought.

This early use of the Saxon of Northumbria as a written and cultivated speech is held by Scott as likely to account "for many anomalous peculiarities in the history of English romance and minstrelsy. In particular, it will show why the Northumbrians cultivated a species of music not known to the rest of England, and why the harpers and minstrels of the 'North Countree' are universally celebrated, by our ancient ballads, as of unrivalled excellence. If English, or a mixture of Saxon, Pictish, and Norman, became early the language of the Scottish Court, to which great part of Northumberland was subjected, the minstrels who crowded their camps must have used it in their songs. Thus, when the language began to gain ground in England, the northern minstrels, by whom it had already been long cultivated, were the best rehearsers of the poems already written, and the most apt and ready composers of new tales and songs. It is probably owing to this circumstance that almost all the ancient English minstrel ballads bear marks of a northern origin, and are in general common to the Borders of both kingdoms. By this system we may also account for the superiority of the early Scottish over the early English poets, excepting always the unrivalled Chaucer. And, finally, to this we may ascribe the flow of romantic and poetical tradition, which has distinguished the Borders of Scotland almost down to the present day."*

* *Minstrelsy*, Works v., p. 70.

This passage makes, perhaps, too little allowance for the Scandinavian element and influence on our popular poetry —an influence manifested especially in Northumbria and the Lowlands of Scotland. Giraldus Cambrensis, who refers to the peculiarity of the Northumbrian music as singing in parts in a low and high chant, is probably right when he attributes it to the Scandinavians.* There is, besides, not a sufficient recognition of the fact, subsequently brought out by Buchan and Kinloch, that the north-east of Scotland—embracing especially Aberdeen, Banff, and Moray—produced a large crop of song and ballad, independently altogether of the Border district. I do not doubt but that the same Scandinavian influence was at work there as helped to produce the ballad poetry of the Lowlands. And, further, I think there is every probability that, although the historic scenes of many of the Arthurian exploits can be traced to the Kingdom of Strathclyde or Cumbria, and the North of England generally, the poems celebrating them were chiefly framed in Armorica —the place of quiet retreat and refuge for the exiled Britons of our island—and that they thence came back to Britain itself, and also spread over the courts of France and Germany in Norman-French.

* Anglorum populi, simul canendo symphoniaca utuntur harmonia, binis tamen solummodo tonorum differentiis, et vocum modulando varietatibus, una inferius, submurmurante, altera vero superne, demulcente pariter et delectante."—*Cambriæ Descriptio*, C. XIII. Quoted by Scott.

IX.

MEDIÆVAL PERIOD—FEATURES OF BORDER LIFE AND CHARACTER.

THE families introduced into the valleys of the Tweed and its tributaries by David I. and his immediate successors have now nearly all disappeared from the district. With a few exceptions, even their names have passed away from the hills and glens over which they once ruled, or they are borne by landless representatives. But their abandoned towers or dwelling-places still form one of the most characteristic and suggestive features of the scenery of Tweedside. The ruined Border Peel meets you on many a knowe. But, as a rule, not much of it remains. In many cases the tower itself, with the quaint human life carried on within it—the comfort there was, the terror and alarm, the hopes and fears, the courage to face danger—all have equally passed away; and seldom now have we aught but the solitary ash whose roots are enwoven beneath the green mound, where hall was bright and hearth-stone gleamed. The names of the ancient possessors are mere dim memories;

even their very graves are forgotten. They have undergone almost the last stage of human oblivion.

Curiously enough the Border Keep bears the same name, *peel* or *pile*, as the Cymri gave to their hill-dwellings (*pill*, moated or fossed fort). The circular fort of the older race is found generally near the comparatively modern keep, but higher up on the hill. These old mounded dwellings are arranged as carefully in sight of each other as are the mediæval towers; and some of the larger of them, such as that on the East or White Meldon, near the junction of the Lyne with the Tweed, commands the view of upwards of twenty ring-forts and the lines of nearly as many valleys. But it certainly is curious, as showing the continuity of historical feeling, and the power of the past, that the race which actually displaced these old Cymri, settled on the hills, almost on the very spots where they had lived, and borrowed from them the name of their dwellings.

It would be difficult to fix the exact date of the erection of any existing building or ruin in the shape of a Border castle. The strengths of the Borders were so frequently destroyed and rebuilt in the reigns of the early Stewarts, that we must regard what remains of them as representing rather the more ancient form of structure, than as the actual buildings of the time of Robert Bruce and his son. This holds true even where we have record of a special license for the building. In the eleventh Parlia-

ment of James III., 2nd April, 1481, there is an order for the repair and furnishing of castles and strengths near the Border and upon the sea-coast.* We find two of the king's castles named—viz., Dunbar and Lochmaben; and the owners of St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Temptallon (Tantallon), Hume, Dowglas, Hailes, Adringtowne, "and specially the Hermitage, that is in maist danger," are commanded to keep and defend them. Each Lord is called upon "to stuffe his awin house, and strength them with victualles, men and artailzierie, and to reparrell them quhair it misters."† Long before this period, the land was obviously well covered with castles and castellated houses. They were, in fact, the characteristic features of the old Scottish landscape. Alexander Hume of Polwarth, in his picture of a Scottish summer day, one of the first poems in the language that dared to be literally true to the Scottish landscape, says very characteristically:—

"The rayons of the sunne we see
Diminish in their strenth;
The schad of everie towre and tree,
Extended is in lenth.
Great is the calm for everie quhair,
The wind is settin downe;
The reik thrawes right up in the air,
From everie towre and towne."‡

And this was written as late as the time of James VI.

We can trace the remains of the mediæval peels in the

* C. 82. † Is needed. ‡ *Thanks for a Summer Day.*

shape of mouldering wall, or ivied gable, or simply green mounds, up the Tweed from Berwick to the Bield. They can be followed, further, up nearly all the side valleys—up the glens of the waters, and the hopes of the burns. The marks of hill road and bridle track will even now conduct the experienced mountaineer from ruin to ruin, and he will be astonished at the directness of the routes which the old dwellers in those remote towers knew and used. Very few of these old towers are now entire. Yet we can picture one of them well enough. The external appearance was that of a solid square mass of masonry—generally the greywacke of the district perforated with holes or *boles*, which admitted air and light, and also served for defence. This was usually perched on a knoll or eminence —perhaps the top of a scarped rock with a craggy face; the Tweed itself, or one of its tributary waters or burns, flowed near; some birches and hazels, an ash or an elm, dotted the knoll; and on the green braes a few sheep or cattle quietly pastured. It was seldom of more than three storeys—the two lower of which were vaulted. The lowest story was a refuge for the cattle that grazed about the tower, at least in times of danger. The second and third storeys accommodated the family—with what comfort or decency it would sometimes be painful to imagine. There was usually a court-yard in front of the tower, surrounded by a wall called the *barmkyn*, the access to which was through a strong iron gate, or wooden door studded with

iron nails. Inside and around the court-yard were the huts or dwellings of the retainers of the family.

On the top or roof story of the peel was the *bartisan*, which served as a place of outlook, and also as the withdrawing room for the ladies of the household on a quiet summer afternoon or evening. On the edge of the upper wall of the roof, or attached sometimes to the chimney, hung an iron cone sunk in an iron grating, filled with fuel—peat, and pine-root—ready to be lit at the moment of alarm.

The accommodation for a family in these solid pieces of masonry was no doubt limited enough. It must, however, be borne in mind that in the cases of the more considerable families, there was frequently, besides the tower or peel, an ordinary place of residence of a more commodious character. The peel was in these instances reserved as a place of refuge in times of attack and danger, especially for the females and children of the family. Thus Carey, in his *Memoirs*, referring to his actings as deputy under Lord Scroope, while English Warden of the Marches, tells us that a Graeme, living within five miles of Carlisle, whom he had occasion to attack, "had a pretty house, and close to it a strong tower for his own defence in time of need." When Carey approached the place, and before he could surround the house, "the two Scots [the brother Graemes] were gotten in the strong tower."* They were, however,

* Quoted in Note 48, *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

ultimately obliged to open the iron gate of the tower and surrender themselves as prisoners to the Deputy.

One of the best surviving examples of what must be regarded as at least latterly only a peel of refuge is that of Barns, on the Tweed, about three miles above the town of Peebles. It was probably at one time the residence of the family, but after its possessors, the Burnets, had migrated to a larger house, that stood to the west of it, and is now pulled down, this quaint old keep, with a date of 1498, was preserved as a place of resort in times of alarm and danger.

Then several of the more considerable families, who lived in summer in the ancestral tower, had mansion-houses in the neighbouring town, to which they emigrated in winter. Thus, in Peebles there was the town residence of the Hays of Neidpath, afterwards Earls of Tweeddale, viz., the old Castle of Peebles at the head of the High Street. There was also the residence of their successors, and probably at one time their own, the Dean's House in the High Street of Peebles, now the Chambers Institution. The lairds of Dawyck had also, up to the union of the Crowns, and even later, a residence in Peebles, known latterly as "The Pillars," and situated to the north-east of the site of the town cross. Even the Dickiesouns of Winkston and Smithfield, small and poor lairds, and always lawless and aggressive, had, strange to say, a town house in the Cowgate of Edinburgh. It was a quaint and curiously ornate structure, but

alas! I am afraid it has gone down within these few recent years under the spirit of modern improvement, which means generally the vulgar Philistine intelligence, and is often very far from carrying with it unmitigated blessings.

The internal fittings of these towers were, no doubt, rude enough. The upper or convex part of the vaulted roof of each story was usually covered with a wooden floor, and, as a precursor of the modern carpet, the boards were generally strewn with the bent grass of the moors, or the rushes of the haughs. With these were intermingled sweet smelling herbs, such as thyme, bed-straw (*galium*), or fresh odoured heather. The fragrance of the hillside would thus at least for a time be felt in the narrow and ill-lighted rooms. Glass was rare and costly; and the narrow boles that served for windows were either left wholly open, or they were fitted with a board that served as a shutter. Well on in the time of the Stewarts, "glessin work"—*opus vitreum*—was found only in the houses of the wealthy.* Gawain Douglas, in his famous Prologue on Winter, prefixed to the Seventh Book of the Æneid, speaking of his getting up in the raw winter morning, tells us that he

> "Bad beit the fyire,† and the candill alycht,
> Syne blissit me, and, in my weydis dycht,

* On this point there are some curious entries in the *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer of Scotland*—See Preface, p. ccii.

† *Beit* is commonly to add fuel, replenish; here to stir up, enkindle.

Ane schot wyndo unschet† a lytill on char,‡*
Persaivit the mornyng bla, wan and har."§

This window was evidently without glass, and common at the time.

The significant feature of the picture, when these peels were the important points of the district, is that iron cone sunk in the iron grating, which holds the *bale*‖ or *need-fire.*¶ It could tell its tale by night or by day—by ruddy glare or by dark cloud of smoke. This was the form of the bale-fire usually attached to the tower or castle. What may be regarded as the other form has been described as that of "a long and strong tree, set up with a long iron pole across the head of it, and an iron brander fixed on a stalk, in the middle of it, for holding a tar-barrel."* This form would doubtless be that generally used on a hill or eminence.

The regulation of the bale-fire forms the subject of an Act of Parliament of James II., 13th October, 1455. It is both curious and minute:—"It is seene speedefull that there be coist made at the East passage, betwixt Roxburgh

* A projecting window. † Opened. ‡ Ajar.

§ *Works* by Small, III., 78.

‖ Originally flame or blaze, then signal-fire; A. S. *bael*—funeral-pile; more likely Icl. *baal*, strong fire.

¶ Need-fire is said to be originally fire produced by the friction of two pieces of wood; afterwards beacon-fire. Its origin is given as A. S. *nyd*, force, and *fyr*, fire.

* Stevenson, quoted by Scott, Notes to the *Lay*, p. 47.

and Berwick. And that it be walked at certain fuirds, the quhilkis gif mister* be, sal make taikenings† be bailes burning and fire. In the first, a bail to be made at Hume, be the walkers at that fuird, quhair it may be seene at Hume. And als that the samin persones may come to Hume in proper person, and their bailes to be made in this maner. Ane Baile, is warninge of their cumminge, quhat power that ever they bee of: twa bailes togidder at anis, they are cumming in deed: four bailes, ilk ane beside uther, and al at anis as four candelles, suithfast knawledge that they are of great power and meanis far, as to Hadingtoun, Dunbar, Dalkeith, or thereby. The samin taikenings to be watched and maid at Eggerhope Castell,‡ fra they se the fire of Hume, that they fire richt-swa. And in like maner, on Sowtra Edge sal see the fire of Eggerhope Castell, and mak takening in like maner. And then may all Lowthiane be warned, and in speciall the Castell of Edinburgh, and their four fyres to be maid in like maner, that they in Fife and fra Striviling east, and the east parte of Lowthiane, and to Dunbar all may see them, and cum to the defense of the Realme. And they will not be sleuthful them selve, for to be warned of their fyres, they sal wit of their cumming ouer Tweede, and then considering that their far passage, we sal, God-willing, be als soone reddie as they, and al people be west Edinburgh to draw to Edinburgh, and fra Edinburgh east to Haddingtoun. And all

* Need. † Signals, tokenings. ‡ Same as Edgerstone, in the Jed Water.

Merchandes of Burrowes to pursue the East quarter, quhair it passis, and at Dumpender Law and North Berwick Law Bailes to be burnt in forme before written, for warning of the sea-coast."†

No signal ever stirred the breast more deeply or told its story more clearly and picturesquely than that glaring bale-fire. It did its work with incredible rapidity—a rapidity quite telegraphic. Each tower was so situated as to catch the warning from its neighbour, at a distance frequently of only two or three miles. When of an evening at the Fireburn, near Coldstream, the bale

> "Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
> All flaring and uneven,"

the answering flame would rise and be seen so speedily all up Teviotdale, up Ettrick and Yarrow, and up Tweeddale to its furthest wilds, that by the early morning ten thousand armed men have been known to meet together at a single place of rendezvous; for the hill-roads were direct and expeditious, and the Borderer on his hardy pony knew them as well beneath the grey cloud of night as in "the lee licht of the moon."

It was the flame of the beacon-fire along those valleys and streams, so often lit, which fused the people into a common body, kept them true to their allegiance to the Scottish King and the Scottish nationality. Hate and re-

† *Acts of the Scots Parliament*, Iac. II., 48.

sistance to the southerner, the common interest of self-defence, banded them into a unity among themselves, and kept them from breaking off from the king who reigned over them, but really only ruled in Fife and the Lothians. He was to them a rallying centre against a common and powerful foe, and little more than this. The "Hammer of the Scots"—and those who continued hammering, while they thought to break—only welded them at every stroke into a harder and more inseparable nationality. It is sometimes said that Scotland carries no lesson for history. Nothing is less true. The history of Scotland has been a perpetual protest against despotism. Its lesson is, first, the power of individualism, and latterly that of the rights of conscience. It was well not only for Britain, but for Europe, that there was one people at least who, from the first, could not brook and had the spirit to withstand government by unqualified prerogative, and the arrogance of feudal domination. It was a grand human instinct which led them to feel that the will of one man never could be counted upon as a righteous law for a nation.

Pope John XXII. was led, through the misrepresentations of the English Ambassadors at the Papal Court, to excommunicate the King Robert Bruce, and lay the kingdom under ecclesiastical ban. The interdict was met by a heroic Parliament held at Arbroath in 1320. Eight earls and twenty-one nobles appended their names to a letter from this Parliament to the Pope, which, for the principle

it asserted, was worth any document in European history. It asked the Pope to require the English King to respect the independence of Scotland, and mind his own affairs. "So long as a hundred of us are left alive," say the signitaries, "we will never in any degree be subjected to the English. It is not for glory, riches, or honours, that we fight, but for liberty alone, which no good man loses but with his life." That is the spirit and the lesson of Scottish history. It is a spirit and a lesson that will be required through all history.

If we turn, however, from this aggressive influence which welded the people of the Lowlands in one, to their internal relations, we shall find not much unity among them, and but little dependence on the Scottish Crown. There is one element which has not been sufficiently attended to in considering this point, and that is the ground of the tenure of lands in the district. This tenure in some parts of the Lowlands, particularly near the Border, to say nothing of the Debateable Land which lay between the Esk and the Sark, was not always recognised by the owner as flowing from or dependent on the Scottish Crown. During the first War of Independence there no doubt was the forcible extrusion of persons from lands in the Lowlands, especially the Forest, who held them in virtue of English assumptions and English charters. This would be popularly regarded as both meritorious and patriotic. Then, in the troublous times of the fourteenth century, during the contest between the descen-

dants of Bruce and Baliol, there were probably cases of lands being violently taken from the actual holder on very slight pretexts. The only title to these was subsequent continued occupancy. This was deemed enough by popular opinion, or rather by the opinion of the clansmen who depended on the owner, their chief, and profited by his possession. This element tended to render the connection between the Laird and the Crown weak, and to place both the laird and his retainers comparatively beyond the reach of law. The actual proprietor was indeed a little king in his own domain. This comes out in a very marked way in the *Song of the Outlaw Murray*. This is undoubtedly an old ballad, and refers to some historical transaction not later than the beginning of the sixteenth century, possibly in the time of James IV. In it we find the King represented as actually treating with a subject on something like equal terms. And we find the subject asserting his right to his lands, not as a feudal holding under the Crown, but as something which he had won by his own good sword. The ballad is well known, but it may be useful here to notice some of the main features in it, as throwing light on life and manners in the Forest, within forty miles of the capital, apparently as late as the time of James IV. We have, first of all, the picture of the residence of the Outlaw, no doubt intended for the castle of Hangingshaw:—

"There's a feir castelle, bigged wi' lyme and stane;
O! gin it stands not pleasauntlie!

In the fore front o' that castelle feir,
Twa unicorns are bra' to see;
There's the picture of a knyght, and a ladye bright,
And the grene hollin abune their brie.*
There an Outlaw kepis five hundred men;
He keepis a royall cumpanie!
His merry men are a' in ae livery clad,
O' the Lincome grene sae gay to see;
He and his ladye in purple clad,
O! gin they lived not royallie!
Word is gane to our nobil King,
In Edinburgh where that he lay,
That there was an Outlaw in Ettricke Foreste,
Counted him nought, nor a' his courtrie gay."

A messenger is sent by the King, who says:—.

"'The King of Scotlonde sent me here,
And, gude Outlaw, I am sent to thee;
I wad wot of whom ye hald your landis,
O man, wha may thy master be?'"

The answer is characteristic and to be noted:—

"'Thir landis are MINE!' the Outlaw said;
'I ken nae King in Christentie;
Frae Soudron† I this Foreste wan,
When the King nor his knightis were not to see.'
'He desyres you'l cum to Edinburgh,
And hauld of him this Foreste fre;
And, gif ye refuse to do this,
He'll conquess baith thy landis and thee.
He hath vowed to cast thy castell down,
And mak a widowe o' thy gaye ladye!

* Brow. † Southern.

He'll hang thy merrye men, payr by payr,
In ony frith* where he may them find.'
'Ay, by my troth,' the Outlaw said,
'Than would I thinke me far behinde.
'Ere the King my feir countrie get,
This land that's nativest to me!
Mony o' his nobilis sall be cauld,
Their ladyes sall be right wearie.'"

The King, on hearing this answer, is wroth, and he summons Perth, Angus, Fife, and the Lothians; but the Outlaw is not far behind him, for he summons his friends and kinsmen, Halliday of Corehead, Murray of Cockpool, and Murray of Traquair. The King approaches the Forest with his retinue:

"The King was cuming through Caddon Ford,
And full five thousand men was he;
They saw the derke Foreste them before,
They thought it awsome for to see."

The King, however, takes the advice of Lord Hamilton, and, instead of having recourse to violent measures, sends Pringle of Torsonce to treat with the Outlaw, and ask him to meet the King at the Permanscore,† The Outlaw consents, somewhat reluctantly. What weighs with him most is not so much himself or his own interest, but the thought that in this unequal contest with the King others dear to him are likely to be affected by his refusal:—

"'It stands me hard,' the Outlaw said;
'Judge gif it stands na hard wi' me,

* Wood, here place. † Probably Penmanscore.

Wha reck not losing of mysell,
But a' my offspring after me.
My merrye men's lives, my widow's teirs—
There lies the pang that pinches me;
When I am straight in bluidie eard,
Yon castell will be right dreirie.'"

Even in presence of the King he asserts his original title to his lands:

"'Thir landis of Ettricke Foreste fair,
I wan them from the enemie;
Like as I wan them, sae will I keep them,
Contrair a' kingis in Christentie."

He is induced, however, to surrender them to the King, who bestows them upon him again as a feudal investiture. This makes him directly responsible to the King for the conduct of those dwelling in the Forest. The narrative of the ballad is not to be taken as representing literally an actual transaction; but it is quite impossible that it could have assumed the shape and tone which characterise it, had there not been historical basis for this sort of tenure of land, and a strong popular feeling that conquest by the sword and broad arrow was a deal better than any form of feudal investiture.

The weakness of central authority led to the constitution of clanship among the Borderers. Of the king or his power, the Borderers—especially those in the central and mountainous districts—knew little; and their respect for him

or it was no greater than their knowledge. It was through the combination of the clan that the Borderers protected themselves from each other. It was also in this way that the chiefs, or principal men of the different districts, exercised discipline on those who adhered to them; and it was through those chiefs that the Crown was able to control the lawlessness of their followers, by making the heads of the name or clan surety to satisfy persons injured, or to bring the offender to trial. As, however, it not unfrequently happened that both chief and man were engaged in the same lawless act, depredation on a neighbour's property or attack on his person, the system was far from being effective in repression. It was necessary for the king directly to interfere; and occasionally a vigorous monarch would make himself felt. When outrages became very clamant, the king would suddenly appear in person, with, of course, a strong body-guard, before the gate of some notorious reiver, and hang him then and there, or carry him off straightway to Edinburgh never to see his Border keep again. Both James the Fourth and his son, James the Fifth, were distinguished in this line. The former on the 18th November, 1510, rode "furth of Edinburgh" during the night to Jedburgh, and then to Rule Water, apprehended certain reivers there—Turnbulls, no doubt—had them taken to Jedburgh, where some of them were "justified"—that is, completed the reckoning of their lives by being hanged.*

* Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials*, I., p. * 67.

When the winter snows had vanished from the hills in the spring of 1529-30, the King, James the Fifth, had apparently thought it full time to make an example of certain Border reivers. This was the blackest spring they had experienced. The King rode into the glens of the Yarrow and the Ettrick at the head of a considerable force, and seized certain notorious offenders. These were William Cokburne of Henderland, and Adam Scott of Tuschielaw. The popular tradition is that the one was hanged over his own gate at Henderland Tower, and the other on the historic ash tree which still bears the marks of the frequent rope, as it stands a solitary symbol of feudal power by the grim and grand ruins of Tuschielaw. This is perhaps a popular fancy of what ought to have been the local and specific retribution in each case; but the fact seems to be that there was some regard, at least, to the forms of justice, for both Cokburne and Scott were taken to Edinburgh and duly tried there. On May 16th, 1530, William Cokburne of Henderland was convicted, in presence of the King, "of high treason, committed by him in bringing Alexander Forestare and his son, Englishmen, to the plundering of Archibald Somerville; and for treasonably bringing certain Englishmen to the lands of Glenquhome." His lands were forfeited, and he himself beheaded.*

This is, no doubt, the true account of the matter. A

* Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials*—1530, temp. 17, Iac. V.

stone in the old and now deserted burying-place attached to what was the chapel, near the Tower of Henderland, has the inscription, "Here lyis Perys of Cokburne and hys wife Marjory." But this is evidently not the laird who was executed. There can be no doubt that the man who suffered was the William Cokburne referred to in Pitcairn's *Trials.** His son, also William, in 1542, lodged a petition against the justice of the sentence, and of the forfeiture, and he seems to have got the lands of his father restored to him.† The wonderfully pathetic and touching ballad — *The Widow's Lament*—probably refers to the apprehension of Cokburne. The poor widow may have asked and got the body back from Edinburgh, and superintended its burial in a very lonely fashion. The retainers of a condemned and beheaded reiver were likely to be scanty enough. It must be remarked also that the ballad itself says nothing of where the knight was executed; it speaks only of his having been slain by the King at the instigation of a foe, and of the widow burying him by herself in a heart-broken way. Though the verses

* The Cokburnes had evidently been a turbulent lot. At the Justice Aire of Peebles, in 1498, "Edward Cokburne produced a remission for the slaughter of Roger Twedy, in company with the Laird of Hennirlande. William Cokburne of Hennyrlande became surety to satisfy the parties." At the same time and place "Sir William Cokburne of Scraling, Knight [Skirling in Peeblesshire], produced a remission for act and part of the slaughter of Walter Twedie, son of John Twedy of Drava, in Peblis."—Pitcairn, I., p. * 26.

† Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials*, I., p. * 145.

are well known, I make no excuse for quoting them in full. They belong to the simplest, yet truest and most pathetic poetry :—

"My love he built me a bonny bower,
And clad it a' wi' lilye flour,
A brawer bower ye ne'er did see,
Than my true love he built for me.

There came a man, by middle day,
He spied his sport, and went away ;
And brought the King that very night,
Who brake my bower, and slew my knight.

He slew my knight to me sae dear,
He slew my knight and poin'd* his gear ;
My servants a' for life did flee,
And left me in extremitie.

I sew'd his sheet, making my mane ;
I watch'd the corpse, myself alane,
I watch'd his body, night and day ;
No living creature came that way.

I took his body on my back,
And whiles I gaed, and whiles I sat ;
I digg'd a grave, and laid him in,
And happ'd him wi' the sod sae green.

But think na ye my heart was sair,
When I laid the moul' on his yellow hair ;
O think na ye my heart was wae,
When I turned aboot away to gae?

* Literally, distrained ; Cokburne's estate was escheat to the Crown.

Nae living man I'll love again,
Since that my lovely knight is slain;
Wi' ae lock o' his yellow hair,
I'll chain my heart for evermair."

A not less memorable case of "justification" was that of Adam Scott of Tuschielaw, "the King of the Borders," otherwise "King of Theivis"—a great name then among the clan of the Scotts. This has come as clearly and distinctly down to us by oral tradition as any event in Border history. Yet tradition seems to have made the same mistake as in the case of Cokburne of Henderland. For Scott was not hanged on the traditional and proper ash tree, but, like Cokburne, was tried and beheaded in Edinburgh. He was convicted there on the 18th of May, 1530, "of art and part of the theftuously taking Blackmail, from the time of his entry within the Castle of Edinburgh, in ward from John Browne in Hoprow; and for art and part of theftuously taking of Blackmail from Andrew Thorbrand and William his brother; also from the poor tenants of Hopcailzow, and of art and part of theftuously taking Blackmail from the tenants of Escheschеill.* "Beheaded" is the curt and ominous sequel to the conviction. As all these places are in Peebleshire, we get a glimpse of the ordinary sphere of his depredations as on the banks of the Tweed. These he, no doubt, found richer in grain than the unploughed haughs and hills of the Ettrick. We have no

* Pitcairn, *Crim. Trials*, I., p. * 145—1530.

ballad commemorating the death of Tuschielaw. If any ever existed it has perished. It is somewhat odd that the fall of so prominent a man was not thus commemorated. Besides the ballad referring to Cokburne of Henderland, there was chanted for a long time in the Forest a set of pathetic verses commemorating the death of Murray of Ettrick Forest on the brae of Newark, by the emissaries, if not the very hand, of Buccleuch. These stanzas have unfortunately perished. The fate of Armstrong of Gilnockie, to be immediately referred to, was embalmed in a noble poem. Perhaps the Blackmail levy with which Scott was charged, and the ominous notches of the rope on the ash tree by his tower, may lead us to suspect that popular feeling rather sympathized in this case with the action of the King than with the deeds of the reiver.

The King, in his Border raid, had further either brought back or summoned to Edinburgh certain lairds who had secretly aided the reivers, or who had not exercised their authority to repress their depredations. Some of these were put in ward in the castles of Edinburgh, Blackness, and Dunbarton. Among them were the Earl of Bothwell, who was finally banished the kingdom, the Lords Maxwell, Home, Lairds Buccleuch (called Balcleuch), Farnyhirst, Pollock [? Polwarth], Johnestoun, and Mark Ker. These lords and lairds were doubtless not the least anxious to repress the reivers; they found them most useful auxiliaries as means of revenge, and trouble to hostile neighbours, when it

suited them to employ them. The King besides had a strong apprehension that "they secreitlie should rayse weir betwixt the realmes." Their allegiance was, in fact, so unsteady from their intermediate position between the English and Scottish King, and from the severity with which the latter had treated several of the principal Borderers, that the intriguing Bothwell might have cast the balance in favour of England. Besides warding those mentioned, he made certain barons and lairds of Roxburgh, Berwick, Peebles, and Selkirk find surety to enter before the Justice when required.

The following barons and lairds of Peeblesshire found caution in various sums to enter before the Justice, on a warning of fifteen days, to underlye the law for all crimes to be imputed against them, viz. :—

John, Lord Hay of Yester.
William Murray of Rommanose (Romanno).
William Stewart of Trakware.
Thomas Myddilmaist of Grestoune.*
John Tuedy of Drummelzeare.
William Guvane of Cardrono.
William Vache of Dawik.
John Sandelands of that Ilk.
Mr. John Hay of Smeithfield.
Patrick Portuus of Halkschawis.
Alexander Tayt of Pyrne.

* Originally Grevestoun, on the Tweed near Traquair—now part of that estate.

Among the barons and lairds of Selkirkshire who found caution for the same cause are John Vache [probably of Synton] and William Hunter of Polmude,* though Polmude is in Peeblesshire.

We find a later entry, August 17 of the same year, to the following effect:—"John Lord Hay of Yester, became in the Kingis Will, for negligence committed by Mr. John Hay his brother, in outputting Adam Nyksone, and one called Elwald, common Thieves, given to him in custody by the King, in name of the said Lord Hay of Yester, as Sheriff Principal of Peebles. The Justice commanded him to ward within the town of Linlithgow, until his Majesty's will should be declared." †

But the summer of the same year, 1530, was to witness a still more signal example of stern punishment by the same monarch. This was the execution, apparently even without form of trial, of the laird of Gilnockie — Johnie Armstrong—and most of his followers, at Caerlanrig in Teviotdale. "It is somewhat singular," says Pitcairn, "that the circumstances, as they are detailed in the popular ballad or song, are substantially correct; and there cannot now be a doubt that Armstrong was most basely betrayed and put to death, even without the mockery of a form of trial."‡ The expedition during which this act took place was arranged, apparently, to unite pleasure and business.

* Pitcairn, under May 19th, 1530. † Pitcairn, I., p. * 149.
‡ *Criminal Trials*, I., p. * 153.

In late May or early June, on the summons of the King, the Earls of Huntlie, Argyll, and Atholl, "with many othir Lordis and Gentlemen, to the number of twelf thousand, assemblet at Edinburgh, and thair fra went with the kingis grace to Meggatland, in the quhilkis bounds war slaine, at that tyme, aughteine scoir of deir."* It was particularly mentioned that the Highland Earls were to bring their deer hounds with them, and this was the result of the sport. The eighteen score of deer being duly slaughtered in Meggatland, the king and his followers rode across the hills to Caerlanrig in Upper Teviotdale, where he met, according to a form of summons which was held morally to imply protection to the parties, John Armstrong of Gilnockie and his twenty-four well appointed horsemen.† According to one version of the story, some words arose between the King and Armstrong, and the former, yielding to his somewhat hot and impulsive temper, ordered Gilnockie and nearly all his band to be hanged there and then; or, according to another, and quite as likely an account, the king was instigated to this unjustifiable deed by Robert, Lord Maxwell, who was glad to have a rival judicially executed, when he could not have him cut off in another way. The truth seems to have been, that, while Armstrong and his followers were on their way to the King, on invitation, but without an express letter of protection, trusting, in fact, to his honour, they were surprised by a

* Lindesay of Pitscottie.

† The number is variously stated at 36 and 60.

band of men provided for the purpose, and brought before the King, as if they had been apprehended against their will. It is certainly odd that, while Henderland and Tuschielaw were taken to Edinburgh and underwent a judicial process, Gilnockie was really hanged, without form of trial, where he met the King. Both Cokburne and Scott were reivers whose depredations were made upon their neighbours, while it was the pardonable boast of Armstrong that his marauding was entirely on the other side of the Border—in fact, a useful subject to the Scottish King, to be commended rather than hanged. As he himself said, King Harry would "doun weigh my best hors with gold to knaw that I war condemned to die this day." My Lord Maxwell got for his reward in this matter a gift of all the personal and heritable property of Armstrong (July 8th, 1530). The ballad which commemorates the fate of Armstrong and his followers is one of the finest of the historical class, and has some wonderfully picturesque and life-like touches. Popular feeling was entirely on the side of the victim on this occasion; and the long-cherished belief in the withered trees, which bore the bodies of the doomed men, was inspired by a strong sense of the harshness and injustice of the execution. After Armstrong had petitioned hard for his life, and the King had ordered him to death as a traitor, we have the spirited reply:—

> "Ye lied, ye lied, now, King, he says,
> Altho' a King and Prince ye be!

For I've luved naething in my life,
I weel dare say it, save honesty—

Save a fat horse and a fair woman,
Twa bonny dogs to kill a deir;
But England suld have found me meal and mault,
Gif I had lived this hundred yeir!

She suld have found me meal and mault,
And beef and mutton in a' plentie;
But never a Scots wyfe would have said,
That e'er I skaithed* her a puir flee.

To seik het water beneith cauld ice,
Surely it is a greit folie—
I have asked grace at a graceless face,
But there is nane for my men and me!

But had I kenn'd ere I cam frae hame,
How thou unkind wadst been to me!
I wad have keipit the Border side,
In spite of all thy force and thee!

Wist England's King that I was taen,
O gin a blythe man he wad be!
For anes I slew his sister's son,
And on his breistbane brak a tree.

* * * * * * *

There hang nine targats† at Johnie's hat,
And ilk ane worth three hundred pound—
'What wants that knave that a king should have,
But the sword of honour and the crown?

* Harmed. † Tassels.

O where got thou these targats, Johnie,
That blink sae brawlie abune thy brie*?'
'I gat them in the field fechting,
Where, cruel King, thou durst not be!

* * * * * * *

Farewell! my bonny Gilnock Hall,
Where on Esk side thou standest stout!
Gif I had lived but seven years mair,
I wad hae gilt thee round about.'

John was murdered at Caerlinrigg,
And all his gallant companie;
But Scotland's heart was ne'er sae wae,
To see sae mony brave men die,—

Because they saved their country deir
Frae Englishmen! Nane were sa bauld,
Whyle Johnie lived on the Border syde,
Nane of them durst come neir his hauld."

I may mention that I have heard the greater part of this ballad recited long before I read it in Scott's *Minstrelsy*, and by one who had never seen the *Minstrelsy* or read the ballad in print. There were a few variations—particularly the following instead of the lines as now printed:—

"So to seek grace frae a graceless face,
When there's nane for my men or me."

And—

"Where gat ye that girdle, Johnie,
That blinks sae brawlie abune yer brie;

* Brow.

I gat it in the field o' battle,
Where, cowardly King, thou durst na be."

This is a small piece of evidence, if any were needed, that the ballad was known before Scott's time, and quite independently of the *Minstrelsy*.

The result of these stern measures was that the Borders were quieted for the remainder of the King's lifetime. He died 14th December, 1542. Sir David Lindsay, in *The Complaint*, thus refers to his dealings with the law-breakers of the time:—

"Justice holds her sword on high,
With her balance of equity;
And in this realm hath made such order
Both through the Highland and the Border,
That Oppression and all his fellows
Are hangèd high upon the gallows.

* * * * * *

John upon-land* been glad, I trow,
Because the rush bush keeps the cow."

After the King's death, and during the Queen Dowager's Regency, matters appear speedily to have returned to their former condition. And they were never worse than in the two years from 1559 to 1561, when, the Queen Dowager being deprived of office, there was no settled government in the country. It is to this period that we may refer the ballad of Sir Richard Maitland of Lethington "Aganis

* The farmer.

the Thievis of Liddisdail."* They had become very bold, and extended their depredations beyond their usual bounds into parts inconveniently near Maitland's own lands. The account of them is curious and picturesque, and interesting as drawn by a contemporary hand, and the poem affords a good specimen of the Lowland Scotch language in the time of Mary:—

"Of Liddisdaill the common theifis
Sae pertlie steillis now and reifis,†
That nane may keip
Hors, nolt, nor sheip: nor yit dar sleip,
For thair mischiefs.

They plainly through the cuntrie rydis,
I trow the mekil devil thame gydis!
Quhair they onsett,
Ay in thair gait‡ thair is na yett,§
Nor dure‖ thame bydis.¶

* * * * * * *

Thay thiefs have neirhand* herreit† haill
Ettrick Forest, and Lawderdaill;
Now are they gane
In Lothiane; and spairis nane
That they will waill.‡

* * * * * * *

Bot§ common taking of blak maill,
Thay that had flesche, and breid, and aill,
Now ar sa wraikit,

* See Sibbald's *Scottish Poetry*, III., p. 104.
† This is the old Northumbrian plural of the verb. ‡ Road.
§ Gate. *Gait* is Scandinavian; Swedish, *gata*, a road; *yett* is Saxon.
‖ Door. ¶ Hinders. * Almost. † Plundered.
‡ Choose, select. § Besides.

Maid puir and naikit ; fane to be slaikit
With watter-caill.*

Each of the depredators had a nick-name or "to-name," and Maitland mentions the principal ones, with their characteristics :—

"Thai theifs that steills, and tursis† hame,
Ilk ane of thame hes ane *to-name* ;
Will of the Lawis,
Hab of the Shawis ; to mak bair wawis‡
They think na schame.

Boyth hen, and cok,
With reil and rok,§ the Lairds Jok
All with him takis.

Johne of the Park||
Ryps¶ kist* and ark. For all sic wark
He is richt meit.

He is weil kend, John of the Syde,
A gretar theif did never ryide,
He never tyris
For to brek byris. Our muir and myris,
Ouir gude can gyde.

Clement's Hob is the last of the reiving list, and the writer very shrewdly puts his finger on the source of the evil, when he says :—

"To sic grit stouth† quha eir wald trow‡ it

* Water-broth. † Pack and carry. ‡ Walls.

§ Spinning-wheel and distaff. Scott glosses it "both the spinning instrument and the yarn."

|| An Elliott, who afterwards, in a hand-to-hand encounter, wounded Bothwell, and was himself killed by the Earl.

¶ Searches. * Chest or trunk, kind of wooden box.

† Theft. ‡ Believe—Icl. *trua*.

But gif sum greit man it allowit?
Rycht sair I trew
Thoch it be rew*; thair is sa few
That dar avow it."

Soon after Queen Mary's government was settled, strong measures were taken for the repression of those disorders. But the poem, apart from other evidence, shows of how little efficacy was the plan by which the more turbulent spirits were supposed to be kept in check, though their head or the chief of their name, who, as the legal phrase of the time went, became surety "to satisfy parties," after any deed of blood, or outbreak of slaughter, or unwarranted raid on a neighbour's goods. If the culprit had no chief to come forward for him, he was regarded as a "broken" man, and usually hanged — not for the crime, but for deficiency in bail. As to the *satisfying* the parties, this must have been exceedingly inefficacious, as we find the satisfaction repeated innumerable times without the slightest apparent result in staying drepredation or the feud of blood. Still this tie of clanship, and control by means of it —often cemented by a bond of man-rent—was the only sort of organization that availed on the Borders for a long period. It was the one check on brute force and violence. And it helps us to understand the social life and history of those Borderers. Occupying an isolated portion of the country between England and Scotland, and having to depend chiefly on themselves for protection from the Southern foe, and

* A pity.

from each other—the combination of clans and families was perfectly natural. The Scottish King showed his weakness to deal with them, especially with their aggressions on England, so plainly, as even in time of peace, to give the English King a legal power of retaliation, which was frequently exercised with the most savage cruelty.

Thus, divided into clans and combinations of families for protection, we need not wonder at the rise and subsistence through centuries of the family feuds, which appear to us so bloody and disgraceful. The feeling of revenge for injury to the person and for violent death is a trait of character which the Lowlander inherited from his Anglo-Saxon ancestry. It is rooted, no doubt, in a certain moral conception that the person or personality of a man is the most sacred thing about him, and the corresponding notion that any despite done to that must be wiped out in blood. It was this kind of notion which led the old Anglo-Saxon to feel that death even was preferable to captivity when he was taken in battle—that now, being no longer his own, but another's, his personality was degraded. So strong was this feeling, that if a man of good Saxon family should happen to be taken in battle, and prefer captivity to immediate death, he was regarded as a disgrace to his line, and often summarily despatched by his own blood relations. This sense of the absolute need of retaliation for hurt or death to the person, ruled the actions and the social history of the Border

Scot from the earliest times to a period past the union of the Crowns. It was at the root of the national struggle for life, when life meant mainly physical being and well-being. So strong was it in the middle period of our history that it was transmitted from sire to son for successive generations through hundreds of years. Collateral branches of a family were not exempt from an obligation to be instruments of retaliation, or a liability to be the victims of it at the hands of the relatives of the stricken man. Our whole social life on the Borders for hundreds of years is full of instances of this kind of feeling. The Church even for a time recognised its power, if not its propriety. It was customary in these counties for long "to leave the right hand of male children unchristened, that it might deal the more deadly, in fact the more *unhallowed* blow to the enemy. By this rite they were devoted to bear the family feud or enmity."*

"Alas! that Scottish maid should sing
The combat where her lover fell!
That Scottish bard should wake the string
The triumph of our foes to tell!
Yet Teviot's sons with high disdain,
Have kindled at the thrilling strain
That mourned their martial father's bier;
And, at the sacred fount, the priest
Through ages left the master hand unblest,
To urge, with keener aim, the blood-encrusted spear."†

* *Minstrelsy*, VII., 144.

† *Ode on Visiting Flodden*—John Leyden.

Now this seems to us a shocking sentiment; and no doubt it is not morally justifiable, on any high ethical code, or under a perfect system of social order or law. But in these trying times there was no protection in central authority for the weak or injured. There was neither defence nor retaliation, except such as the survivors of the slaughtered man could give. The sense of personal dignity and family preservation was all that could be looked to in the matter. And I can quite understand how such a feeling should keep retaliation warm in men's breasts. At any rate it has been finely used for emotional effect in the retrospective poetry of our times. There is that grand scene in the early part of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which has somehow a mysterious yet powerful hold on our sympathies :—

"In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier
The warlike foresters had bent;
And many a flower and many a tear,
Old Teviot's maids and matron's lent:
But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropped nor flower nor tear!
Vengeance deep-brooding o'er the slain,
Had locked the source of softer woe;
And burning pride and high disdain,
Forbade the rising tear to flow.
Until amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee,
'And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be.'
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek."

These lines have been regarded, and justly, as among the finest in the poetry of Scott. They evidence, without doubt, a deep, true, and subtle insight into the workings of human emotion. But the pith of them is not his own. They are simply a transcript—no doubt an unconscious one—but still almost a literal transcript from an old ballad by a nameless author. Here is the original from *Johnny Armstrong's Last Good Night* * :—

> "O then bespoke his little son,
> As he sat on the nurse's knee,
> If ever I live to be a man,
> My father's death revenged shall be."

These lines were in Scott's ear when he wrote the stanzas given above. He had simply forgotten that they were a memory.

Now and again we note a curious touch of relenting on the part of the Border Lairds for the red-handed deeds in which they had a share. In 1473 a chaplainry was founded at the Altar of St. John the Baptist in the Parish Kirk of St. Andrew in Peebles, with the end mainly of saying prayers and celebrating masses for the health of the souls of "James Tuedy of Drummelzier, William Cockburne of Henriland (Henderland), Paul of Vaich (Veitch) of Dawic, Patrick Lowis of Menner, George Elphinstone of Henristone (now called Hayston), and Thomas Dekisone of

* Evan's *Ballads*, III., 106.

Ormistone, and of their ancestors and successors, and also of the souls of all who have paid the debt of all flesh in wars or combats (in guerris sive duellis) between the foresaid parties." These were the lairds of the district whose estates were divided simply by a burn, whose families, moreover, usually intermarried, and who yet, when the absence of English invasion gave them no bond of unity, were occupied in constant red-handed feuds. Memories of the slaughter of fathers, and even remote relations, were handed down to sons, as a heritage and obligation of revenge. Yet it indicated something of softening that they recognized the need of praying for a mercy to the dead, which they were in no way disposed to extend to the living.

After the accession of James VI. the central government became stronger, and the civilising effects of the Reformation spread over the country. The state, however, of Highlands and Borders did not greatly improve. "The sterfull reife, thieft or receipt of thieft, depredationes, open and avowed, fire raising, upon deadly feedes" continued, and were carried on apparently by a lower class than formerly. The servants and tenants of the lairds, and "broken men," were the chief direct instruments; the "landis-lords," if they were cognisant of the irregularities, kept in the back-ground. Cattle-lifting was evidently now not so respectable a pursuit as when the daughter of "the Flower of Yarrow"—who had become the wife of Scott of Harden—married Gilbert Elliott of Stobbs, known as "Gibbie with the gowden garters." Gibbie found

it inconvenient, somehow, to take home his bride from Harden, and left her for a month or so after marriage with her parents. But the old people were resolved not to keep the lady for nothing. Gibbie was accordingly bound over to pay for his wife's keep with her parents, and the price, according to agreement, was the full plunder of "the first harvest moon." This was thoroughly in keeping with the Harden motto, "Phœbe reparabit cornua," or, freely translated, "We'll hae moonlight to-night again."

In the eleventh Parliament of James VI., July 1587, certain very stringent acts were passed with a view to the repression of these crying disorders. There was to be a special meeting of Privy Council on the first lawful day of every month, with a view to hear and decide on complaints;* all "Landlords and Baillies of the landes on the Bordours and in the Hie-landes quhair broken men has dwelt, or presentlie dwells, sal be charged to find caution and souertie," that they apprehend the malefactors and present them for trial;† further, as many of the tenants and dwellers on the lands of the Lairds acknowledge the order and depend upon "Captaines, chieffes, and chieftaines of clannes, als-weill on the Hie-land, as on the Bordours," "against the wil ofttimes of the Lord of the ground," these chiefs are called upon to lodge persons as pledges at the nomination of the Secret Council, with a view to restrain disorder.‡

Again, all men born in "Liddis-daill, Esk-daill, Annan-daill,

* C. 92. † C. 93. ‡ C. 94.

and the landes, sum-time called Debaitable,* or in the lands of the Hie-lands," who have long continued disobedient, are to be removed out of their present dwellings in the "In-land," unless their landlords become surety for them. †

The following is "the roll of the names of the Landis-lords and Baillies of Landes dwelling on the Bordoures quhair broken men has dwelt and presentlie dwellis, to the quhilk roll, the 94 Acte of this Parliament is relative":—

"*Middle March.*

The Erle Both-well.
The Laird of Farnie-hirst.
The Erle of Angus.
The Laird of Buck-cleuch.
The Schireffe of Teviot-daill.
The Laird of Bed-roule.
The Laird of Wauchop.
The Lord Hereis.
The Laird of How-paislay.
George Turne-bull of Halroule.
The Laird of Littill-dene.
The Laird of Drum-langrig.
The Laird of Chisholme.

* This was a tract of land lying between the Esk and the Sark. It was divided between the two kingdoms in 1552.

† C. 95.

West March.

The Lord Maxwell.
The Laird of Drumlangrig.
The Laird of Johnestoun.
The Laird of Aple-girth.
The Laird of Holmends.
The Laird of Gratnay.
The Lord Hereis.
The Laird of Dum-widdie.
The Laird of Lochin-war."*

We have also "the roll of the clannes that hes captaines and chieftaines quhom on they depende, oftimes against the willes of their Landis-lordes, alsweill on the Bordours, as Hielandes, and of sum special persones of Braunches of the saidis clannes." Those of the Borders are:—

"*Middle Marche.*

Ellottes.
Arme-stranges.
Nicksonnes.
Crosers.

West Marche.

Scottes of Eusdaill.

* *Acts of the Scots Parliament*—Eleventh Parliament; James VI.

Beatisonnes.
Littles.
Thomsonnes.
Glendunninges.
Irvinges.
Belles.
Carrutheres.
Grahames.
Johnstones.
Jardanes.
Moffettes.
Latimers."*

The quenching of the deadly feuds of the Lowlands was a still harder task than the repression of reif and depredations on neighbours' lands. The habit of personal retaliation for personal injury had for centuries been, as we have seen, an almost constituent part of the social feeling of the Lowlander. The moral right of self-defence, in districts where the law was powerless to protect the injured, or punish the aggressor, had risen to a very positive ethical code. The nearest kinsman of the injured or slain was bound to take up the quarrel; any of his kinsmen might take upon himself the duty of revenge; and any relative of the man who had done the hurt was liable to have the wrath of the avenger directed against him. Family

* *Ibid.*

feuds of the deadliest sort thus naturally subsisted from father to son, through many centuries, in a self-generating manner. In dealing with such a state of things it was very difficult properly to apportion the wrong. Hence, all through the acts of James VI. there is a certain recognition, if not of the intrinsic propriety of the custom, at least of its use and wont, and of the necessity of submitting each instance still subsisting to arbitration, with a decided allowance for the balance of mutual reprisals that might have taken place. In the sixteenth Parliament, November, 1600, this spirit comes out very clearly. It passed an act entitled, "Anent removing and extinguishing of Deadly Fead." The king and estates of Parliament "for removing of the deadly feads that abounds within the Realme," find it expedient "that the parties be charged to compeir before his Heighness and Secret Counsell, to submit to twa or three friends on either side; or to subscryve ane submission, formed and sent by his Majestie to them to be subscryved." The friends are to decern within thirty days, or to agree at their first meeting on an "overs-man." His Majesty is oversman or arbiter, in the case of disagreement. The act proceeds—"because all feads are ane of thir thrie natures, namely, that there is either na slaughter upon either side, or slaughter upon ane side only; or else slaughter upon both sides. The parties in the first may be commanded to agree, due satisfaction being offered, and performed at the sight of friends and overs-man in maner foresaid. Where

there is slaughter upon both sides, his Majestie may by rigour and equalitie of justice compel them to agree, due satisfaction to be made on either side, according to the qualitie of the offence and persons offended. Where the slaughter is onely on the ane side, the party grieved can not refuse in reason to submit in maner foresaid, al quarrel he can beare to any person innocent, justice being made patent to him against the giltie." *

One of the last acts of James VI., before he left for England, was to visit in person the district of Upper Tweeddale, with a view to staunch the bloody feud which for some centuries had subsisted between the lairds of Dawyck and Drummelzier. He had imagined that matters were made up—but no. At his Court at Greenwich, in 1611, he was disturbed by rumours of continued broils between these two families. He was old enough to remember people speak of the shuddering sensation which the news of a fatal hand-to-hand encounter between Dawyck and Drummelzier had created at the Scottish Court, even in those times of atrocious deeds. On a morning in early summer the two lairds had met by chance on the haugh of the Tweed. They were alone when they confronted each other. The memories of centuries of mutual violence and mutual deeds of blood were quickened in their hearts; and that strange savage feeling of blood-atonement seemed to thrill in both. They agreed to settle the strife of centuries then and there.

* Sixteenth Parliament, C. 22.

And tradition tells us that, as the birds waked the June morn, Drummelzier was found dead beside a bush by the river, and the blood had stained the white blossoms of the hawthorn spray. Still the feud was carried on by son and son. And the King, in March, 1611, in a proclamation calls upon Lord Dunfermline and the other Lords of the Privy Council to take steps to suppress this strife. The document is a curious one, and, as it has not been published before, I give it entire :—

"JAMES REX,

"Right trustie and right wellbeloved cousengills and counsellors, we greet you weel. Whereas we understand that the deadly Feid betwixt Veitches and Tweedies is as yet unreconciled, and our peace keept betwixt them only by the means of renewing of assurances from time to time; but since we came so far, by great pains in our person, enduring our stay there, and by our continued direction sinsyne suppressed that monster within that kingdom, so wee do hardly think that there be any one Feid except this in all that kingdom unreconciled, and the wrongs and mischiefs done by either of them, as we understand, to others, being in such a proportion of a compensation as neither party can either boast of advantage or otherways think himself too much behind. Therefore our pleasure and will is that you will call before you the principalls of either surname, and then take such course of the removing

of the Feid and reconciling as you have been accustomed in like cases. And whosoever shall disobey your commands and direction you shall committ them prisoners, and certifie us thereof to the effect we may return unto you our further pleasure and will therein, and so bid you fareweel.

"From our Court at Greenwich, Tenth March, 1611. To our right trustie and right weel-beloved cousins and counsellors, the Earle of Dunfermline, Lord Chancellor, and remanent Lords and others of our Privy Councill in our kingdom of Scotland." *

I do not know whether we should most sympathise with the "great pains in person" of the King, or most admire the quiet assumption of the moral principle of the fair balance of injuries, which the power of righteousness in the world, working through the centuries, had contrived to adjust between the combatants.

* *Barns' Family Papers.* The original is in possession of William Burnett, Esq., Haylodge, Peebles, the representative of the ancient family of Burnet of Barns, to whose kindness I am indebted for a copy of the paper.

X.

THE POETRY OF THE BORDERS—THE OLDER POEMS DESCRIPTIVE OF SOCIAL MANNERS.

THE poetry of the Borders, subsequent to the Romantic epoch, has been inspired by the life and scenery of the district. It is a truly indigenous product; and consists in its earlier stage of Ballad and Song. This has taken its most artistic shape in the poetry of Scott; which grew directly out of the *Minstrelsy*. But, besides the Ballad and Song of the Borders, there are remains of an old form of poetic composition which deals not so much with action and emotion, as with the manners of the time—partly rustic, and partly ecclesiastical. This is a direct outcome of the district, as much as the Ballads; but it is not necessarily, as almost all these are, the production of men born and living in the district itself; for social manners are open to any casual and acute observer. Still, what remains of this class of pictorial and didactic compositions is well worthy of notice. We find in it a very instructive picture of

the manners of the past, alike of rural life, of general society, and of the Church. The three poems still preserved for us of this class are, *Peblis to the Play*, *The Thrie Tailes of the Thrie Priests of Peebles*, and *The Friars of Berwick*. These all represent an element which has been emphatically marked in the history of Scottish poetry—the humorous painting of social manners, through which there gleams a genial laughter, and often a shrewd common sense, that points both the moral and the remedy. *Peblis to the Play* is unquestionably a very old poem. It is a painting in the manner which Teniers afterwards illustrated—a picture of rustic life and festivities, of the humorous and grotesque incidents of a mediæval Feast Day in an old provincial town, the centre of a rural district. Something like the scene might indeed have been seen in the same locality well down in the present century. The "Play" was not, as Lord Hailes seems to imagine, the name for a stage-play; but indicated the sports and festivities which took place at Peebles annually on Beltane, the second, not the first of May, as is usually supposed. These had, in all probability, come in place of the ancient British practice of lighting fires on the hill-tops in honour of Baal, the Sun-god; hence the name *Baaltein*, *Beltane*, *i.e.*, Baal's fire. The Christian Church had so far modified the ceremonial as to substitute for the original idolatrous practice that of a day of rustic amusement. A Fair or Market, at the same period, which lasted for eight days, had also been instituted by Royal Charter.

But even the practice of fire-lighting on the hill-tops was late in dying out. With the usual tenacity of custom, it survived for long all memory of its original meaning.

The authorship and the date of the poem have been disputed. Unbroken tradition points to James I. (1423-1436) as the author; to whom, undoubtedly, we must ascribe *The King's Quair.** *Peblis to the Play* has certainly none of the pathos, delicacy of touch, true feeling for nature, which *The Quair* plentifully exhibits. But these qualities were not to be expected from the nature of the subject. There is, however, a fine realism in the painting of scenes and manners, a rich humour and finished execution. We could not look for other qualities in such a poem. And it must have been composed by a man who was intimately acquainted with the localities, the language of the district, and with the modes of dress, manners, and pursuits of the people. It is written in a Tweedside dialect. We had until lately, indeed have now, many of the words of the poem employed in exactly the same sense as they bear in it. The author, too, was obviously a man of large kindliness and culture. He laughs at, yet enjoys heartily, the oddities of the scene. James I. fulfils all those requirements of authorship. During the thirteen years of his reign, in which the most accomplished of the Stewarts sought to civilise the savage and barbarous country to whose throne he had succeeded, his face was as familiar to the Burgesses

* Quire, or little book.

of Peebles, and in the Valleys of the Tweed, the Manor, and the Meggat, as is the presence of Queen Victoria in Braemar and on Deeside. The district by the Tweed was the place of his sport and relaxation from that arduous task of government, which he most dutifully assumed. He was an accomplished horseman, an excellent walker, a fleet runner. He handled bow and spear and sword with wonderful dexterity.* Like his successors on the Scottish throne, down to the time of James VI., Meggatdale was for him a favourite hunting-field. 'That sport was to be got there in the olden time, we have proof in the fact that Mary on one occasion with a party killed 500 head of game. But she at last found the sport so poor, that she resolved not to go back again. Her father, with the Highland Lords, killed, as we have seen, in the memorable spring of 1529-30, "aughtene score of deir." James I. was thus familiar with the district. The Cloisters of the Cross Church, and the Castle of Peebles, afforded him lodging for the time of his stay. In 1427 he gifted to his confessor the Hospital of St. Leonard, on the Tweed, about two miles below Peebles; and when, in 1436, he was so foully murdered in Perth, the people of Peebles, cherishing a kindly memory of him, endowed a daily mass for his soul in the Parish Church of St. Andrew. All these circumstances connect him very closely with the locality, the people, and their manners. And we can

* Bower, *Scotichronicon*, II., p. 504.

readily conceive the gifted king, in the pleasant retrospect of a May day on the Tweed, sitting down to give effect to the impulse of picturing what he had seen and enjoyed at the Beltane Festival.

The title of James I. to the authorship of the poem has been sharply contested by Lord Hailes, Sibbald, and others, but, as appears to me, without much real force. Major seems almost certainly to allude to it in the oft-quoted paragraph in which he speaks of the King's writings:— "Composuit . . . jucundum artificiosumque illum cantum, *At Beltayn.*" *

The date of authorship in this case cannot be very conclusively decided by reference to the language, for the reason that we have no manuscripts except such as were transcribed long subsequently to the supposed period of composition. One great test-word of the date of Scottish literature is the article *a, an, ane.* Before 1475, *an* or *ane* was very rarely used before a consonant. After that date, at least after the year 1500, it was almost universally so employed. In *Peblis to the Play* the latter usage certainly prevails. This would seem to bring the poem down to at least the time of James III., or even James IV. But this circumstance ceases to have force when we consider that we have no MS. of the poem earlier than the latter part of

* Major, *De Gestis Scotorum*, f. cxxxv. Paris, 1521.—For the arguments against and for James's authorship, see Lord Hailes, *Observations on the Statutes of James I.*; Sibbald, *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry*, I., 137; Irving's *History of Scottish Poetry*, p. 151- -Carlyle's edition.

the sixteenth century, and that we have no warrant for holding a Ms. of this date to be the original. We thus cannot tell what amount of change in orthography may have been introduced by transcribers.*

But the test of the article, so far as it is capable of being applied, rather tells in favour of the antiquity of *Peblis to the Play*. For this poem is mentioned in *Christis Kirk on the Grene*, also attributed to James I., though some writers hold it to be a production of James V. We may thus infer that *Peblis to the Play* is the older production of the two. The passage in *Christis Kirk on the Grene* is as follows :—

"Was nevir in Scotland hard nor seen
Sic dancing nor deray,†
Nouthir at Falkland on the grene,
Nor *Pebilis at the Play;*
As wes of wowaris‡ as I wene,
At Christis Kirk on a day :
Thair came our kitties§ weshen clene,
In thair new kirtillis‖ of gray,
Full gay,
At Christis Kirk of the grene that day."

Now, if we suppose that the reference here is to the poem, and not merely to the festival, an important conclusion follows. For we find that in *Christis Kirk on the Grene* the use of the article *a* before a consonant is almost uniform. This leads us to suppose that it is a production before the year

* See Murray, *Dialects of Southern Counties*, p. 56.

† Revelry. ‡ Wooers. § Country lasses. ‖ Gowns.

1500, and not at all of the time of James V.; for, while it is possible that the later usage of the article, the *an* or *ane* before a consonant, might have been introduced into an early manuscript by subsequent transcribers when the usage had grown up, it is highly improbable that the earlier usage, contrary to the habit of the time, would have been inserted into a later manuscript. Both the poems, therefore, may be regarded as productions of the fifteenth century. And, if we consider the similarity of the stanza of the two poems, in itself of rare structure, the analogous nature of the subject, the similar qualities of quiet observation and kindly humour which they display, the power, too, in each, of vivid picturing almost by a single epithet, we shall not be far wrong in referring them to the same authorship. And in that fifteenth century there is no man more likely to have written them than the author of *The King's Quair.*

The opening stanza of *Peblis to the Play* indicates the time and circumstance of the poem, and the merry ring of the verse gives the key-note of the poem—a certain outrageously joyous holiday feeling, the intenser for its rarity—and this is sustained with wonderful art all through the poem:—

"At Beltane,* when ilk† bodie bownis‡
To Peblis to the Play,
To heir the singin and the sounds,
The solace, suth to say;
Be firth§ and forest furth they found,‖

* Beltane, 2nd May. † Every. ‡ Makes ready to go.
§ Enclosed wood, or place. ‖ Issue, or go forth; A. S. *fundian*, to go.

They graythit* them full gay;
God wot,† that wald they do, that stound,‡
For it was their Feist Day,
They said,
Of Peblis to the Play.

All the wenchis of the west
War up or the cok creu;
For reiling§ thair micht na man rest,
For garray‖ and for gleu;¶
Ane said my curches* are nocht prest;
Than answerit Meg full blew,†
To get an hude,‡ I hald it best;
Be Goddis saull that is true,
Quod scho
Of Peblis to the Play.

She tuik the tippet be the end,
To let it hing scho leit§ not;
Quod ane, thy bak sall beir ane bend,
In faith, quod she, we meit‖ not.
Scho was so guckit¶ and so gend,*
That day ane byt† scho eit nocht;
Than spak hir fallowis that hir kend,
Be still, my joy, and greet not
Now
Of Peblis to the Play.

Hop-Cailzie, and Cardronow,‡

* Dressed. † Knew. ‡ Time; German *stunde.* § Bustle.
‖ Haste of preparation. ¶ Mirth. * Kerchiefs. † Blue.
‡ Hood. § Let. ‖ Mate. ¶ Light, or foolish, also *gauckit.*
* Playful. † Bite.

‡ These are places on the Tweed just below Peebles, now Kailzie and Cardrona. This line is most incorrectly printed by some editors, as:—"Hope, Calzè, and Cardronow," as if three places were designated; whereas there are but two, viz., Hop-Cailzie, or Kailzie, and Cardrona.

Gaderit* out thick-fald,†
With *Hey and How Rohumbelow;*
The young folks were full bald.‡
The bagpipe bleu, and thai out threu
Out of the townis§ untald.
Lord sic ane schout was thame amang,
Quhen thai were our the wald‖
Thair west
Of Peblis to the Play.

* * * * * *

Than thai come to the tōwn endis
Withouttin more delai,
He befoir, and scho¶ befoir,
To see quha was maist gay.
All that lukit thame upon
Leuche* fast at thair array:
Sum said thai were mercat† folk;
Sum said the Queene of May
Was cumit
Of Peblis to the Play."

The other stanzas contain some very rough, yet humorous scenes and pictures.‡

The Thrie Tailes of the Thrie Priests of Peebles seems to be referred to in *The Complaynt of Scotland.* The production may thus be taken as earlier than 1549, or even 1547:— "The Priest of Peblis speris ane questione in ane beuk that he conpilit, why that burges ayris thryuis nocht to the thrid ayr: bot he mycht hef sperit as weil, quhy

* Gathered. † Manifold. ‡ Bold. § Farmsteads and towers.
‖ Plain, or ground. ¶ She. * Laughed.
† Market. ‡ For the whole, see Sibbald, I., p. 121.

that the successours of the universal comont pepil bayth to burght and land, thryuis nocht to the thrid ayr."* This is not quite an accurate description of the poem; for it does not profess to be compiled by a priest of Peebles, but is a series of *Tailes* supposed to be made by three priests who met there on St. Bride's day. It is possible, however, that the reference here is to the author, who was probably well enough known at the time of the composition of the *Complaynt*—who might in truth, from the terms employed, have been living at that period. From the allusions in the poem, Sibbald refers it to the last years of the reign of James V., who died in 1542. The somewhat dissolute character of the King, the low state of the character of the nobility, and the abuse of ecclesiastical patronage are, as he points out, emphatically censured. But the force of this is not great. The very same personal and social irregularities might have been censured in the times of James IV., or even of James III.

Pinkerton, on the other hand, is inclined to regard the poem, from an allusion it contains, as earlier than 1491. The first of the priests—John, "that master was in arte" —hence called Maister John, is represented as a great traveller. Maister Archibald, the second priest, suggests:—

"The first tail tauld mot be Maister Johne:
For he hath bene in monie uncouth† land,

* *The Complaynt of Scotland*, Chap. XVI., p. 143 (Murray's edition).

† Foreign, strange.

In Portingale, and in Civile the Grand;
In five Kynrikis* of Spane als hes he been;
In foure Christin and ane Heathin I wene.
In Rome, Flanders, and in Venice town,
And other landis sindrie up and down."

The reference here to the one heathen kingdom of Spain is that of Granada, which was so until 1491. The poem was, therefore, written either before that date—probably in the reign of James III., 1460-1488—or subsequently, but in the life-time of a man who had been in Spain before Granada was christianised. The other supposition, that the author was ignorant of the spread of Christianity over the whole of Spain, can hardly be entertained.

Pinkerton's view is supported by the fact pointed out by Dr. David Laing, that a portion of the tales, with the title, is found in a MS. which appears to have been transcribed twenty years before the date assigned to the poem by Sibbald. We have almost no data for determining the authorship. Pinkerton ascribes the poem to Dean David Steill, the author of *The Ring of the Roy Robert*, in the Maitland MS. Sibbald, with his theory of its later composition, regards John Rolland as the author. The *Tailes* were first printed, and very incorrectly, in 1603, by Robert Charteris. They were reprinted by Pinkerton in 1792, in part by Sibbald in 1801,

* Kingdoms.

and by David Laing in his *Early Metrical Tales*, Edinburgh, 1826.

The "Thrie Priests" met together on the 1st February —St. Bride's day—in Peebles, and, while enjoying their "collation," each of them in turn tells a story or *taile*. The opening lines present a curious picture of quiet enjoyment:—

"In Peebles town sometime, as I heard tell,
The foremost day of Februar, befel,
Three priests went into Collation,
Into ane privy place of the said town,
Where that they sat right soft and unfoot sair;
They lovèd not nae rangald* nor repair.†
And, gif I should the sooth reckon and say,
I trust it was upon Saint Brydis day;
Where that they sat, full easily and soft;
With many loud laughter upon loft.
And, wit ye well, thir three they made good cheer;
To them there was nae dainties then too dear,
With three fed capons on a speet with creesh,
With many other sundry divers meis.
And them to serve they had not but a boy;
Frae company they keepèd them sae coy;
They lovèd not with ladry‡ nor with lown,§
Nor with trumpours‖ to travel through the town;
Bot with themself what they would tell or crack;
Umquhile¶ sadly, umquhile jangle and jack;*
Thus sat thir thrie beside ane felloun† fire,
Till their capons were roasted limb and lyre."‡

The plan of the first of the *Tailes* is to suppose that the

* Crowd, rabble. † Concourse. ‡ Common people.
§ Low fellows. ‖ Stragglers. ¶ Sometimes.
* Prattle and idle the time. † Fierce, strong. ‡ Fleshy parts.

King proposes to each of the three Estates in parliament assembled certain questions. To the Burgesses or Commons he proposes, in Maister Johne's tale, the question—

> "Quhy burges bairns thryvis not to the thrid air,
> But casts away it that their eldars wan?"

The answer is:—

> "They begin not where their fathers began,
> Bot, with ane heily* hart, baith doft† and derft,
> Thay ay begin quhair that their fathers left."

The steps in the progress of a successful merchant of the time are very graphically sketched:—

> "Becaus their fatheris purelie can begin,
> With hap, and halfpenny, and a lamb's skin,
> And purelie rin frae toun to toun on feit,
> And then richt oft wetshod, werie, and weit;
> Quhill at the last, of monie smals, couth mak
> This bonnie pedder‡ ane gude fute pak,
> At ilkane§ fair this chapman ay was fund;
> Quhill that his pak was worth fourtie pund.
> To beir his pak, when that he faillit force,
> He bocht ful sone ane mekill stalwart horse;
> And at the last so worthelie up wan,
> He bocht ane cart to carie pot and pan;
> Baith Flanders coffers, with counteris and kist;‖
> He waxe ane grande riche man or onie wist.
> And syne into the toun, to sel and by,
> He held a shop to sel his chaffery,¶

* Proud. † Foolish and reckless. ‡ Pedlar. § Every.
‖ Chest. ¶ Merchandise.

Then bocht he wol,* wyselie couth it wey;
And after that sone sailit he the sey,
Then come he hame a very potent man;
And spousit syne a michtie wyfe richt than.
He sailit our the sey sae oft and oft,
Quhill at the last ane semelie ship he coft,†
And waxe sae ful of worldis welth and win,‡
His hands he wish in ane silver basin.
Forouten§ gold or silver into hoard,
Worth three thousand pound was his copburde,‖
Riche was his gounis with other garments gay,
For Sonday silk, for ilk day¶ grene and gray."*

To the Lords he proposes the question:—

"Quhairfor, and quhy, and quhat is the cais,
Sa worthi lordis war in myne elders days,
Sa full of fredome, worship, and honour,
Hardie in hart to stand in everie stour,
And now in you I find the haill contrair?"

The answer is, that justice is badly administered in the country, the husbandmen and tenants of the Lords oppressed, and thus the Lords themselves impoverished, and led to disparage their character and honour by low alliances for the sake of money. To the Clergy and Bishops he proposes the question:—

"Quhairfor and quhy
In auld times and dayis of ancestry,

* Wool. † Bought. ‡ Gain. § Not reckoning.

‖ Cupboard, an important article of furnishing in old Scottish houses, in which plate and other articles of ornament and value were displayed.

¶ Every day, lawful day. * Sibbald, II., p. 233-4.

Sa monie bishops war, and men of kirk,
Sa grit wil had ay gude werkes to wirk;
And throw their prayers, maid to God of micht,
The dum men spak; the blind men gat their sicht;
The deif men heiring; the cruikit gat their feit.
Was nane in bail* but weil they culd them beit.†
And quhairfor now in your time ye varie,
As thay did then quhairfor sa may not ye?"

In other words:—Why have miracles and good deeds ceased in the Church? The answer is as follows:—

"The bishop cums in at the north-window;
And not at the dur, nor yit at the yet;‡
But over waine and quheil§ in wil he get.
Gif he cummis not in at the dur,
Goddis pleuch may never hald the fur.‖
How should he kyth¶ mirakil, and he sa evil?
Never bot by the dysmel,* or the devil.
For, now on dayes, is nouther riche nor pure
Sal get ane kirk, all throw his literature.
For science, for vertew, or for blude,
Gets nane the kirk, bot baith for gold and gude."

The second tale refers to the heedlessness of the King in frequently changing his servants, and the consequent temptation to avarice. The third tale is allegorical, and refers to Death as the messenger of God. What a man loves better than himself—money—refuses to accompany him. What he loves as well as himself—wife and relations—these agree to go with him as far as the port or grave. What he loves less

* Fire, trouble. † Help. ‡ Gate. § Waggon and wheel. ‖ Furrow.
¶ Show. * Perhaps necromancy.

than these, and has very imperfectly served, viz., almsgiving or charity, is the only friend who is willing to accompany him into the presence of the mighty King of all, who now asks from him an account of the deeds of his life.

The *Tailes* are very good specimens of what was for many centuries the staple of Scottish poetry, viz., the picture of habits and manners, in private life, in the Church, in the Courts of Justice, and at the Royal Court. They are highly moral and didactic in tone, patriotic and boldly critical, suggesting remedies for crying evils. The versification, the ten-syllable rhyming couplet, is remarkably smooth; and the treatment and finish show very considerable artistic power.

The Friars of Berwick is a tale very much in the manner of Chaucer, and it is not unworthy of his style. It satirizes the vices of the regular clergy in a way that must have come home to the sense of domestic purity of the people. It is evidently a production of the pre-reformation period, and, like the writings of Sir David Lyndesay, must have contributed in some measure to the ecclesiastical revolution of 1560. It is not a peculiar product of the Border district. It only shows that the Church and the practices of its representatives were the same south of the Forth as in Fife and the north-eastern counties which Lyndesay knew and portrayed.

XI.

THE BALLADS AND SONGS OF THE BORDERS.

THE Border Land of Scotland—that district of hill and valley through which flow the streams of the Liddel, the Teviot, the Ettrick, the Yarrow, and the Tweed—thus nursed in far back times of Scottish History, down to the union of the Crowns, a people remarkable for personal courage and warlike spirit, for a proud feeling of independence, a stern strong individualism of character. Withal, they had hearts capable of being finely stirred by song; warmed to enthusiasm by the simple tale of local prowess; again touched to softness by the love strain, or by the story of widowed grief; again awed by glimpses of that weird and super-sensible world, which their fancies and their fears created for them, and which they believed lay bordering so near this world of common life and everyday experience, that at any moment it might flash on them in the form of fairy pageant in the green glen, or weird wraith on the moor, or water-spirit mingling its wail with the sough

of the flood. This Border Land has been for long one of the great founts of Scottish poetry; and of a form of poetry which possesses features so characteristic that no one who has an ear for the melody of the human soul can mistake its genuine, its native tones. Those features are simplicity of diction, picturesqueness of narrative, a truthful and simple realism, with deep feeling, and the complete subordination of the poet to his subject or theme.

The Ballad and Song of the Border Land have taken their rise, character, and colouring almost entirely from local circumstances. Nothing can be less indebted to inspiration outside of the district itself than these ballads. They have been a pure growth of the soil. Border men did the deeds which Border minstrels sung; and Border maidens and widows felt the love and the sorrow which the poet glorified. The fresh air of old Border life and romance is upon these songs; and now each man born into the district may share in the golden heritage of its poetry, which seems to have grown up among the people as freely and naturally as the birks by the burnsides, or the heather bloom on the hills.

The special circumstances already noted in our historical sketches bore directly on the formation and character of the Ballads. The position of the district, as lying between the centre of Scotland and the Borders of England—two hostile countries—made life in it for long restless and unquiet, left property open to constant danger of being driven or

carried away. The men in the district were hence kept perpetually disciplined to arms for self-defence, or for aggression. And thus were nourished in them the stern virtues of courage, self-reliance, hardihood, and independence.

The weakness of central government and law, which was unable to protect the Borderers either from the English or from each other, led, as we have seen, to the formation and subsistence of clanship among them—a relation nearly as strict on the Borders as in the Highlands of Scotland. This created the feeling of personal attachment to a chief. There was a good deal of roughness and coarseness in their life, a good deal of plain speaking, as in their Ballads; but their circumstances afforded the fullest scope for individualism of character, for personal courage and prowess, endurance and daring, skill of fight and fence, not unmixed with a fine spirit of chivalry and a high sense of honour. It was not much of a peaceful or comfortable time; one clan or family was quite ready to burn the tower or "lift" the cattle of its neighbour; but even their thieving had at least the virtue of openness. It was a habit of mutual reprisals or violent exchange. As old Satchells says:—

"A freebooter is a cavalier who risks his life for gain."

They certainly risked their lives in the act; and they contrast favourably with some people in our own times, who safely and respectably rob by schemes of bubble companies, or

cheat by means of adulterated goods, or send rotten ships to sea.

Out of those circumstances rose the Historical Ballads of the district, that is, the poems that narrate Border exploits, either of a national or a personal kind, against the English on the other side, or of raids and forays of one clan upon another in the Border district itself. These simple rhythmical narratives are among the oldest compositions of the district. The subjects of them, the exploits of the chiefs of the clans and their vassals, were naturally the things that excited most interest in the country side. And the minstrel or bard celebrated these long before he had any feeling for natural scenery as an object of poetic description; or even before he cared to sing of love, or tenderness, or pity. Accordingly, we may place as among the earliest compositions the Historical Ballads, such as *Auld Maitland*, *Battle of Otterbourne*, *The Song of the Outlaw Murray*, *Johnnie Armstrong*, *Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead*, and so on.

As far back in time as the Historical Ballads, and indeed in some cases before them, I am inclined to place that class of ballads which relates to the super-sensible, especially to the world of Fairyland, to beliefs about unseen powers and their influence on human life, such as *Thomas the Rhymour's Ride to Fairyland*, *Young Tamlane*, and others. For, alongside an interest in the exploits of the men among them, the heart of the people was, from an early

period, strongly influenced by beliefs and fancies regarding the unseen. These beliefs were not probably engendered in the Border district. The Borderer held them in common with the northern and Teutonic nations. But the shapes which the beliefs took were due to local circumstances.

The third class of Ballads is that which refers to some tragic or pathetic incident in the life of a person or in a district, in which are mixed up the emotions of love, sorrow, tenderness, pity. Of this class we have examples chiefly in those of the Yarrow, *The Douglas Tragedy*, *The Dowie Dens*, and so on; and in the matchless wail of *The Flowers of the Forest.*

Then we have the fourth class, that particularly of Songs rather than ballads, in which the poet seeks not to narrate chiefly, or even at all, but to give expression to the master emotion of successful or unsuccessful love, such as Lord Yester's *Tweedside*, *John Hay's Bonnie Lassie*, and Robert Crawford's *Bush aboon Traquair.*

Sir Walter Scott in the *Minstrelsy* has classed, or rather thrown together, a great many ballads and songs under the head of "Romantic." Among these are some founded on Fairy inspiration—such as *Tamlane*—some on witchcraft and magical enchantment—as *Kempion*—some properly historical, and, finally, others still that represent strong emotions of love and grief. A classification of this sort is obviously of no real meaning or critical importance. The

central notion of romance seems to be the conception that the laws of nature and natural powers are subject to the control of supernatural agencies, or of persons to whom those agencies communicate their powers. There is, in fact, supposed to be a fusion of the material and the spiritual, the former presenting no form of difficulty which the latter cannot overcome. Very few of the ballads, however, in Scott's classification fulfil this condition. His own *Eve of St. John* and Leyden's *Cout of Keeldar* might fairly come under this description, and, abroad, Bürger, Goethe, and Uhland furnish appropriate modern examples. But surely it was out of place to class with these ballads, or with the productions of the German school of last century, *The Douglas Tragedy* and *The Border Widow's Lament.*

Romance, in this, its primary and essential form, is an expression of the conviction that mere naturalism or materialism—the world as it exists for the senses—is not the whole of things, not all which men should rest in or accept; but that somehow there is a transcendent sphere of power and being, which lives in the world, shows itself there, is yet above it and capable of moving on through all time, and every variety of sensible phænomena. Romance postulates an extravagance and an extraordinariness in the manifestations of this power, because it supposes that the ordinary movements of the physical world are independent, and do not show supernatural agency as the marvellous does. This

is the mere mistake of irreflection; but it is well that, however imperfectly located may be the transcendent and eternal power, there is at least some form of its recognition—a consciousness of its nearness and pervading character.

The secondary yet related meaning of romance seems to be that tendency of individualism in character, which leads to action and situation, not comprised within the limits of conventional rule, and which is novel and striking, as if the person were actuated by some new ideal of life or things. The romantic thus may or may not be a violation of law; that, at least, is not in the actor's thoughts. It comprises, in fact, every form of individualism which asserts itself without regard to the usual course of conduct observed, or tradition accepted in the circumstances, and yet is in itself earnest and true to its conviction of what is noblest and best. But, whatever view we adopt of the nature of romance, there can be no doubt that, as it appears in the older Ballads, it is mainly an inspiration from the Arthurian period, a traditional inheritance, without consciousness of it, from that epoch. And the ballads which express it are of the older type. They lead us back to the early fountains of European romance, as the Fairy Ballads do to Scandinavian mythology.

I do not here profess to give more than a general and convenient classification of those Ballads and Songs. The truth is, there is no principle of division among

them which, if rigidly laid down, would not at once be crossed. The supernatural and historical elements are constantly blended; the mythic and legendary are mixed with both; and the romantic, while appearing here and there distinctly, is really in one or other of its forms all through the older Border poetry. I refer to different Ballads as under those various heads, because there may be found in them the one of those elements more distinctly marked than the other. This fusion of various features, natural to the circumstances and the feelings of the writers, forms the charm of the often unartistic verses. All these elements, moreover, seem equally real to the minstrel. The Fairy world, the power of the magician and wizard, the return from the dead, are spoken of with the same sense of reality as the hand to hand encounter in a deadly raid. The legend of the past is treated as the fact of the present. The romantic in feeling and deed is the natural. It is this blending of ideal and real which softens the otherwise hard and repulsive features of the old Border life. The fearless daring and stern courage of the moss-trooper would stand out unrelieved in its savage severity, were he not felt at the same time to be under the power of an awe and dread from the super-sensible; and were not the narrative of the cruelest deed now and again softened by a gleam of pity and of pathos, as the sudden and passing glimpse of sunlight tenderly illumines the rough grey crag of the Border hills. Hogg touched

all the elements of Border poetry, when he sung in *The Wake*—

> "Each glen was sought for tales of old,
> Of luckless love, of warrior bold,
> Of ravished maid, or stolen child,
> By freakish fairy of the wild;
> Of sheeted ghost, that had revealed
> Dark deeds of guilt, from man concealed;
> Of boding dreams, of wandering sprite,
> Of dead lights glimmering through the night;
> Yes, every tale of ruth or weir,
> Could waken pity, love, or fear,
> Were decked anew, with anxious pain,
> And sung to native airs again."

Of the authors of the older ballads and songs of the Borders we know little or nothing. One tradition of authorship there is. Once the Flower of Yarrow—the Mary Scott who married Harden—was watching the return of her husband from a Border foray; her ear caught the wail of a child among the spoils which Harden had carried home. The mother's heart was touched; she took the child, and reared it, and it is said of him—

> "Of milder mood the gentle captive grew,
> Nor loved the scenes that scared his infant view.
> In vales remote from camps and castles far,
> He shunn'd the fearful shudd'ring joy of war;
> Content the loves of simple swains to sing,
> Or wake to fame the harp's heroic string.
> His are the strains, whose wandering echoes thrill
> The shepherd lingering on the twilight hill,

When evening brings the merry folding hours,
And sun-eyed daisies close their winking flowers.
He lived o'er Yarrow's Flower to shed the tear,
To strew the holly's leaves o'er Harden's bier;
But none was found, above the minstrel's tomb,
Emblem of peace, to bid the daisy bloom:
He, nameless as the race from which he sprung,
Saved other names, and left his own unsung."

James Hogg, as well as Leyden, has referred touchingly to the oblivion which covers the names of the bards of the Tweed and Yarrow:—

"Woe that the bard, whose thrilling song
Has pour'd from age to age along,
Should perish from the lists of fame,
And lose his only boon—a name!
Yet many a song of wondrous power,
Well known in cot and greenwood bower,
Wherever swells the shepherd's reed,
On Yarrow's banks and braes of Tweed;
Yes, many a song of olden time,
Of rude array, and air sublime,
Though long on time's dark whirlpool toss'd,
The song is saved, the bard is lost.

Yet have I ween'd, when these I sung
On Ettrick banks, while mind was young;
When on the eve their strains I threw,
And youths and maidens round me drew;
Or chanted in the lonely glen,
Far from the haunts and eyes of men;
Yes, I have ween'd, with fondest sigh,
The spirit of the bard was nigh;
Swung by the breeze on bracken pile,
Or hovering o'er me with a smile,

Would Fancy still her dreams combine,
That spirit too might breathe on mine;
Well pleased to see her songs the joy
Of that poor lonely shepherd boy."*

William Dunbar—the illustrious author of *The Thistle and Rose* and *The Golden Terge*—who, along with Gawain Douglas, adorned the reign of James IV. (1488-1513), and who lived from 1455 to about 1520, wrote in his old age a *Lament for the Death of the Makars* (Poets). The Lament has a saddened tone about it. We seem to see, as Lord Hailes says, "the once gay Dunbar, now advanced in years, deprived of his joyous companions, and probably jostled out of court by other wits, younger and more fashionable than he. He mentions the names and mourns the death of no less than twenty-three Scottish poets; of about twelve of whom not a single memorial now remains, or, at least, is known." Among the *makars* whose death Dunbar laments are the following:—

"The gude Sir Hew of Eglintoun,
And eik Heryot and Wyntoun,
He has tane out of this countrie.

That scorpion fell has done infek†
Maister John Clerk, and James Affleck,
Frae ballat-making and tragedy.

* * * * * *

* *Wake, Second Bard's Song.*

† Probably made feckless, either incapable or dead.

And he has now ta'en last of a',
Gude gentle Stobo, and Quintine Schaw,
Of whom all wightis has pitie."*

He mentions also, among others, Sir Mungo Lockhart of the Lee, Sir Gilbert Hay, Clerk of Tranent, Sandy Traill. The line which runs "And eik Heryot," was originally printed "Etrick," which gave us another poet. But this was found to be an incorrect reading. "Heryot" and "Stobo" point probably either to the places of birth of the poets or their acquired residences. Designations thus originating were very common at the time. Heriot lies up in the vale of the Gala Water, and Stobo is on the Tweed in Peeblesshire. We have very clear details about the person known as "Stobo." This was another name for Sir John Reid, a churchman and notary, clerk in the secretary's office, in the reign of James III. On the 29th March, 1474, the King granted a pension of £20 a year to "Johne Reide *alias* Stobo," in consideration of his services as foreign secretary to the King's father and himself. Special reference is made to letters written by Reid to the Pope, and to divers foreign kings and princes. The last payment of his pension is in 1504-5, when he is spoken of as deceased before July 13th, 1505.† It can hardly be doubted that Reid was named *Stobo*, from his birthplace in Peeblesshire, or from his connection with that ancient metropolitan church (ecclesia plebania). Reid

* Sibbald, I., p. 209 and 325. † *Treasurer's Accounts*—Preface, p. c.

clearly received his annual salary for effective work done in the secretary's office, but it is quite likely that his poetical talents recommended him for office to a king of the Stewart line, for in the Stewarts there was, as a rule, the taste of the poet, and not unfrequently his genius. Under the chivalrous and romantic James the Fourth, in 1490, we find that "Blinde Harry" received xviii shillings (solidi), and that his name occurs at intervals as a recipient of royal bounty until 1491-2, when it appears for the last time.* We have also in the same reign a recognition by the Treasury of "Wallass that tauld geists," and "Widderspune that tauld tailis to the King." These were possibly not only reciters, but *makars*.

Somewhat later than these there is another name, or rather there are two men of the same name, who were directly or indirectly connected with the Lowlands of Scotland, and who obviously enjoyed a high literary repute in their time. These were both called Sir James Inglis—the Sir being the designation at the time of a class of priests known as the Pope's Knights. One of them was in all probability the author of the *Complaynt of Scotland*. He was chaplain to the Abbey of Cambuskenneth from about 1508 to 1550. He was present at the battle of Pinkie, and he survived until 1554. He has been confounded with Sir James Inglis, Abbot of Culross, who met his death, by violence, at least eighteen years before the *Complaynt* was

* *Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer*, p. 133, edited by Dickson.

published. The principal family of Inglis at this period, and from the time of Robert II., was that of Manor and Manorhead. The family also, at an early period, possessed Branksome, Goldielands, and other properties in Teviotdale, as a fief under the Douglases. By a deed of excambion (23rd July, 1446), these lands were exchanged for Murthockstone or Murdieston in Lanarkshire, then held by Sir Walter Scott, progenitor of the Dukes of Buccleuch. It was thus that the Scotts got a footing in Teviotdale, and added to the limited and bleak pastoral uplands of Bellenden and Buccleuch a wide and rich tract of land, which, besides, had the advantage, to men of their habits, of commanding important passes east and west into England. This excambion, in fact, made the Scotts of Buccleuch. The family of Manor, doubtless, sent their younger sons into the Church, just as did the turbulent Turnbulls of Minto and Bedrule, one of whom was Bishop of Glasgow and founder of the University. The author of the *Complaynt* was a partisan of the French side, a Catholic and a churchman, and, as shown by the language of the work, a native of a southern or Border county.* Sir James Inglis of Cambuskenneth is known to fulfil the first two conditions; and, supposing him to have been a son of Inglis of Manor, he would fulfil the last of them. We have no direct evidence of the poetical talents of the author of the *Complaynt*, but he certainly was intimately acquainted with the whole poetical literature of

* See Murray, Preface to the *Complaynt*, p. cxvi.

Scotland, whether committed to writing or floating in oral tradition—a kind of knowledge he might very well have acquired in his Border home. There is strong presumptive evidence that a son of John Inglis, the Laird of Manor, who died at an advanced age between 1495 and 1500, was the author of the famous *Complaynt of Scotland.* The other Sir James Inglis, of the Abbey of Culross, is referred to by Sir David Lyndesay as a poet of rich and varied faculty:—

> "And in the court bin present in thir dayis,
> That ballatis brevis* lustely, and layis,
> Quhilkis† to our prince dailie they do present,
> Quha can say mair than Schir James Inglis sayis,
> In ballatis, farsis,‡ and in pleasand playis?
> But Culross has his pen maid impotent." §

"This yeire, 1530," says Sir James Balfour, "the Laird of Tulliallane was beheidit the first day of Marche, for killing Mr. James Inglis, Abbot of Culross; and with him a mounck of the same Abbey, a chieffe author of the Abbot's slaughter." ‖ If, as is supposed, Sir David Lyndesay finished *The Papingo* in December, 1530, the last line must mean that Inglis was already dead.

That this Inglis held Church preferment in Fife does not, of course, prove him to be of Fife origin. He is said, indeed, to have been born in Fife, and there was an Inglis

* Write. † Which. ‡ Farces.

§ *The Papingo*, printed in 1538, finished in December, 1530.

‖ *Annales of Scotland*, I., p. 261.

of Tarvet there; but this, like the family of Ingliston, was a cadet of the House of Manor. And thus, possibly enough, the two contemporary men of the name of Sir James Inglis were of the same Border stock.

Is it too much to suppose that we have in the "Heryot" and "Stobo" of Dunbar's *makars*, and possibly in the Inglis of *The Papingo*—all obviously famous men in their time—the author or authors of some of the oldest strains of the Tweed, the Ettrick, and the Yarrow? In this case, some of these poems would take us back to the middle of the fifteenth century, while others would very appropriately be referred to the epoch from 1513 to 1542.

In the collection known as *The Roxburghe Ballads* there is one to which is appended, "The words of Burne the Violer." The ballad is entitled *Leader Haughs and Yarrow.* Burne is supposed to have been one Nicol Burne, a wandering minstrel or violer of the seventeenth century—that is, of the period when the race was fast becoming extinct. Burne is said to have found shelter in his old age with the family of Thirlestane—the Napiers, or rather the Scotts, of Thirlestane—in the upper part of Ettrickdale. Looking to the date and position of Nicol Burne, I have little doubt that Sir Walter Scott had him in his mind in the introduction to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, when he spoke of the aged harper as—

> "The last of all the Bards was he,
> Who sung of Border chivalry;

For well-a-day ! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead ;
And he, neglected and oppressed,
Wished to be with them, and at rest."

The old wandering violer himself says, in the last stanza of *Leader Haughs and Yarrow* :—

" But Minstrel Burne cannot assuage
His grief while life endureth,
To see the changes of this age,
That fleeting time procureth :
For mony a place stands in hard case,
Where blyth fowk kend nae sorrow,*
With Homes that dwelt on Leader side,
And Scots that dwelt on Yarrow."†

Burne may possibly have been the author of some of the other ballads connected with the Yarrow that now survive.

The Ballads of the Borders, historical and legendary, are obviously older than the Songs. Indeed, it is doubtful whether there is any Border song, or even Scottish song generally, now extant, which goes further back than the middle of the seventeenth century. We have record in various quarters of the names of older songs, and even of the airs to which they were sung, but beyond a fragmentary line or stanza, the songs prior to that date

* "Where joy was wont beforrow"—*Other reading.*

† Given in Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany*, I., 182.

have passed from memory. And, while some of the Ballads may originally be referred to a considerably ancient date, the form in which we now have them must be held as representing the changes and additions, the suggestions and the passing touches of many generations. They are, in fact, growths of the ages—the continuous expression of the national heart, rather than individual productions.

That form of the Romantic Ballad, which relates to the feeling of supernatural powers above and around, is even an earlier product of the Border Land than the historical ballad itself. This feeling was for long one of the most marked peculiarities in the history of the Lowland Scot. He brought it with him from the Scandinavian north, and it was nursed into strength by the scenery of his adopted land. One of its most prevalent and powerful forms was that which acknowledged the reality and the sway of the world of Elf, or, as it was called latterly, of Fairy. Besides the well-known prevalence of Elfin belief from the earliest period among the Teutonic tribes, the Ballad of *Thomas the Rhymour*, which turns on this feeling, has the oldest manuscript authority in its favour.* A ballad greatly resembling the opening scene of the Rhymour, but differing in the close of the action, occurs in the *Kæmpe Viser*, or Collection of Danish Ballads, first made by Andrew Sæffrensæn

* See *supra*, p. 233.

in 1591—a friend of Tycho Brahe—and then added to by Peter Say in 1695.

"I laid my haffet* on Elfer Hill,
Saft slooming† clos'd my ee;
And there twa selcouth‡ ladies came,
Sae fain to speak to me.

Ane clappit me then, wi' cheek sae white,
And rown'd§ intill mine ear;
'Rise up, fair youth, and join our dance,
Rise up, but doubt or fear!

Wake up, fair youth, and join the dance,
And we will tread the ring,
While mair nor eardly melody,
My ladies for thee sing.'

Syne ane, the fairest May on mold,
Sae sweet a sang began:
The hurling stream was stilled therewi',
Sae fast afore that ran.

The striving stream was still'd therewi,
Sae fast that wont to rin;
The sma' fish in the flood that swam,
Amo' their faes now blin'.

The fishes a' in flood that were,
Lay still, baith fin and tail;
The sma' fowls in the shaw began
To whitter‖ in the dale.

* Cheek, side of the head. † Light slumber.

‡ Seld-couth, seldom known or seen, strange. § Spoke, whispered.

‖ To warble in a low voice.

'O hear, thou fair, thou young swain,
And thou wi' us will dwell;
Then will we teach thee book and rune,
To read and write sae well.

I'll lear thee how the bear to bind,
And fasten to the aik tree;
The dragon, that liggs* on mickle† goud,‡
Afore thee fast shall flee.'

They dancèd out, they dancèd in,
In the Elfer ring sae green;
All silent sat the fair young swain,
And on his sword did lean.

'Now hear, thou fair, thou young swain,
But and thou till us speak,
Then shall on sword and on sharp knife
Thy dearest heart-blood reek.'

Had God nae made my luck sae gude.
That the cock did waf§ his wing,
I boot|| ha'e bidden on Elfer Hill,
In the Elf-ladies' ring."¶

Sir Oluf and the Elf King's Daughter, in the same collection, further illustrates the existence and strength of the Elfin belief in the north of Europe. *Sir Oluf*, who was about to be married, refused the advances of the Elf King's daughter, whereupon:—

"She's smitten Sir Oluf—it strak to his heart,
He never before had kend* sic a smart;

* Lies. † Much. ‡ Gold. § Flap. || Must.
¶ Jamieson's *Ballads and Songs*, I., p. 225. * Known or felt.

Then lifted him up on his ambler red;
'And now Sir Oluf ride hame to thy bride.'

And when he came till the castell yett,
His mother she stood and leant thereat.

'O hear ye, Sir Oluf, my ain dear son,
Wherefor is your lire sae blae and wan?'

'O well may my lire be wan and blae,
For I hae been in the Elf-women's play.'

'O hear ye, Sir Oluf, my son, my pride,
And what shall I say to thy young bride?'

'Ye'll say that I've ridden but into the wood,
To prieve gin my horse and hounds are good.'

Ear* on the morn, when night was gane,
The bride she cam wi' the bridal train.

They skinked† the mead, they skinked the wine:
'O where is Sir Oluf, bridegroom mine?'

'Sir Oluf has ridden but into the wood
To prieve gin his horse and hounds are good.'

And she took up the scarlet red,
And there lay Sir Oluf, and he was dead!

Ear on the morn, whan it was day,
Three likes‡ were ta'en from the castle away;

Sir Oluf the leal, and his bride sae fair,
And his mither that died wi' sorrow and care,

And lightly the elves so feat and free,
They dance all under the greenwood tree!"§

* Early. † Poured out. ‡ Corpses laid out. § Jamieson's *Ballads*, I., 219.

These show at once the community of conception between Scandinavian and Lowland Scot in the matter of Elfin character and power.

There were various classes of Elves in Teutonic mythology. But the original of the Scottish Elf, afterwards known as Fairy, was probably the *berg-elfen*, or mountain elves, known in Scandinavia as *duergar*. They appear "in the Sagas and in the Edda. They were a race of dwarfish spirits, inhabiting the rocky mountains, and approaching in some respects to the human nature. Their attributes, amongst which we recognise the features of the modern fairy, were supernatural wisdom and prescience, and skill in the mechanical arts, especially in the fabrication of arms. They are further described as capricious, vindictive, and easily irritated."* This original conception came in the middle ages to be mixed up with notions of witchcraft; but the two beliefs were originally essentially distinct. To suppose a mortal endowed with supernatural power is one thing; to imagine supernatural beings surrounding this mortal life is quite another thing. The one might readily come to be felt as exceedingly repulsive and unnatural—especially when connected with diabolical inspiration; the other was softened by being elevated to an ideal sphere outside of the real world—as belonging neither to heaven nor to hell; and thus it was contemplated with feelings mainly of wonder and awe. For purposes of poetry, the

* *Minstrelsy*, II., p. 255.

Elfin conception was obviously the much more effective of the two.

The Elf was in its origin a personification of certain features of nature. Possibly the word is connected, as has been supposed, with *alb* or *albus*, white, and thus the spirit rose as a fancy out of the glancing sunlight as it travels across the hill-face, or the glimpses of the moon as they strike white into the depths of glens. Noon and midnight were the periods of full Elfin power. Even if we suppose the root to be the same with that of Elbe, or running stream, we may quite well include the notion of sparkling light. In the stream dwelt the more malignant *Wæter-Elf*, or Kelpie. He was the spirit of foam and flood. The ordinary elf was, however, a creation of the earth—a dweller in mountain and on moorland. The chace of light and shade, the fitful outbreak of the wind among the hills, the varying forms of cloud that now darken and then throw a shimmering gleam over the moor, represent the inconstant side of nature. This, not wholly beneficent or pleasing, not wholly hurtful or disagreeable to the dwellers on earth, was typified and reflected in the unsteady moral nature of the Elfin beings and in their freakish impulses, directed sometimes to the good and sometimes to the harm of mortals. The Elf or Fairy, as a creature of the wilds, was the symbolical balance of the good and evil wrought out there by natural powers; while the *wæter-elf*, or Kelpie, the spirit that lived in the burn or water, being a similar

natural personification, was yet more thoroughly an enemy of man; for the element in which he resided commonly announced itself, in a mountainous country, by suddenly rising in flood and wrath, and thus proclaimed itself most exclusively as a destroying power:—

"The side was stey, and the bottom deep,
Frae bank to brae, the water pouring;
And the bonny grey mare did sweat for feaf,
For she heard the water-kelpy roaring."*

The Elf was thus the expression of the poetry that lay in the heart of the people. It was the earliest imaginative outcome of the feeling for nature. It came forth as a personification of its features in the form, as might have been expected, mainly of dread, yet not unmixed with a sense of tenderness and ethereal beauty. The rugged rocks and the deep caverns must needs be peopled, and the dwellers therein must have a nature corresponding not only to what was inward and gloomy, but to what was outward, green, sunny, and bright, for the elves lived in both worlds. Naturally fancy framed for the finer spots of earth fairer forms than the ordinary men and women of earth. Thus it was that links of green on the hills, the sunny glimmer of the birken shaw, were peopled with ethereal forms, and soft green knowes were supposed to cover secret halls, where the spirits held their revels,

* *Annan Water.*

and the strange wandering sounds that come across the moorland, and are heard high up among lonely crags, were felt to be the echoings of the bells and the bridle-ring of the Fairy riders.

The attributes of the original Scandinavian Fairy were greatly modified during the middle ages by Christianity, by classical conceptions, and by the fancy of English poets. But in Scotland they retained most of the harsh and stern features of the original. To this end "the face of the country might have some effect; as we should naturally attribute a less malicious disposition, and a less frightful appearance to the fays who glide by moonlight through the oaks of Windsor, than to those who haunt the solitary heaths and lofty mountains of the north."*

The account which the knight in the ballad of *The Young Tamlane*—unsurpassed among Fairy poems—gives of his spiriting away by the Fairies, and of their life, may be taken as fairly embodying the popular faith, and as showing how closely it shadowed forth an impersonation of the aspects of outward nature. This ballad obviously presents some modern diction, and probably also modern stanzas, which it has acquired in the course of its oral transmission. But the whole conception of the story, and the main part of the details, point to a considerable antiquity. The title is also given in the *Complaynt of Scotland.* It was ob-

* *Minstrelsy*, II., p. 307.

viously well-known as far back at least as the early part of the sixteenth century. But there is every probability, on internal grounds of story and conception, that the original is as old as the formation even of the northern English dialect:—

"When I was a boy just turned of nine,
My uncle sent for me,
To hunt, and hawk, and ride with him,
And keep him cumpanie.

There came a wind out of the north,
A sharp wind and a snell;
And a deep sleep came over me,
And frae my horse I fell.

The Queen of Fairies keppit* me
In yon green hill to dwell;
And I'm a fairy, lyth and limb,
Fair ladye, view me well.

But we that live in Fairyland,
No sickness know, nor pain,
I quit my body when I will,
And take to it again.

I quit my body when I please,
Or unto it repair;
We can inhabit at our ease,
In either earth or air.

Our shapes and size we can convert
To either large or small;

* Caught while falling.

An old nutshell's the same to us
As is the lofty hall.

We sleep in rosebuds soft and sweet,
We revel in the stream;
We wanton lightly on the wind,
Or glide on a sunbeam."

But elfin pageant or fairy dance never would tolerate the scrutiny of mortal eye. Glance of it there might be; a mortal might see that it was, and be dazzled and interested for a moment by the wondrous and unearthly sight; but no sooner was the group aware of the curious gaze of one of middle-erd than it passed away—the green spot of the revels, the hall with its crystal floor and golden roof, the quaint pageantry of living forms within it, were lost in the mists of the gloaming, or fused with the clear-spreading and formless glimpses of the autumn moon, out of which fancy had originally evoked them:—

"When we cam there, wi' wee wee knichts
Were ladies dancing, jimp and sma';
But in the twinkling of an e'e
Baith green and ha' war clein awa."

The Elfin world was thus surrounded, to the popular imagination, with a deep sense of mystery. As a power that interfered with mortals, often spirited them away to an unseen realm, it was a source of dread. It inspired that peculiar feeling which arises from the thought of a power mysterious and super-sensible, which yet touched the margin

of this earthly life of ours. This is the feeling which, in various degrees of intensity, is displayed in the Fairy Ballads, and which helps to give them their wonderful influence, even now, on the imagination. It is illustrated in the hold which the Queen of Elfinland had over Thomas the Rhymour, and in the haunting sense of a time of recall to "another cuntré" which overshadowed his whole subsequent life. And the mystery of Elfinland is deepened, and its power over the emotion of dread intensified, by the glimpses which we get, in the ballad of the Rhymour and others, of the dark ways that lead to the Elfin world, and the life that is there—neither chequered by mortal change or calamity, nor cheered by mortal hopes —removed, on the one hand, from the pitiless agony of hell, and shut out from the pure bliss of heaven. The two stanzas which describe the unearthly journey, illustrate what has been said regarding the modifications which the older ballads have undergone. They are different from the lines in the oldest copy, yet they are very grand:—

"O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk mirk nicht, and there was nae stern* licht,
And they waded through red blude to the knee,
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
Rins through the springs o' that cuntrie."

* Star.

The Ballad of *The Rhymour*, but particularly that of *The Young Tamlane*, brings out the dark, as well as the bright side of the Elfin faith. The latter pictures a scene as weird and awsome as the heart of man has conceived. The good folks of fairy were not altogether free from the powers of Evil; for they had to pay *kane** or *teind*† every seventh year to Hell, in the shape of a member of their own company, or of a living man. No doubt this was a post-Christian element of the creed, arising from the notion of vicarious sacrifice, which, in the middle ages, the Devil was supposed entitled to exact. The notion appears in the old ballad of the Rhymour; it is the ground of the action in *Young Tamlane*. The knight had been spirited away by Elfin enchantment, and was now in its power. The probability was that when the infernal tithe came to be paid he would be the victim handed over to Hell:—

"Then would I never tire, Janet,
In Elfish land to dwell;
But aye, at every seven years,
They pay the teind to hell;
And I am sae fat and fair of flesh,
I fear 'twill be mysel'."

There was, however, a possibility of rescue; the enchantment which held him might be broken, and he himself restored to an earthly life. But what a degree of resolution and courage on the part of the friend or lover of the

* Payment in kind. † Tithe or tenth.

Elfin thrall was needed to effect a rescue! On one night of the year only was this possible. On Halloween, fair Janet, the lover of the Fairy-bound knight, must wait alone on the wild moor for the unearthly procession in which he was to pass, and there recognise, seize, and hold him captive:—

"Gloomy, gloomy was the night,
And eiry was the way,
And fair Janet, in her green mantle,
To Miles Cross,* she did gae.

The heavens were black, the night was dark,
And dreary was the place;
But Janet stood with eager wish
Her lover to embrace.

Betwixt the hours of twelve and one,
A north wind tore the bent;
And straight she heard strange elritch sounds
Upon the wind which went.

About the dead hour of the night,
She heard the bridles ring;
And Janet was as glad o' that
As any earthly thing!

Their oaten pipes blew wondrous shrill,
The hemlock small blew clear;
And louder notes from hemlock large,
And bog-reed struck the ear;
But solemn sounds or sober thoughts
The Fairies cannot bear.

* * * * * *

* Perhaps Mary's Cross.

Fair Janet stood with mind unmoved,
The dreary heath upon;
And louder, louder waxed the sound
As they came riding on.

Will o' Wisp before them went,
Sent forth a twinkling light;
And soon she saw the Fairy bands
All riding in her sight.

And first gaed by the black black steed,
And then gaed by the brown;
But fast she gript the milk-white steed,
And pu'd the rider down.

She pu'd him frae the milk-white steed,
And loot the bridle fa';
And up their raise an erlish* cry
'He's won among us a'!'

They shaped him in fair Janet's arms,
An esk,† but and an adder;
She held him fast in every shape,
To be her bairn's father.

They shaped him in her arms at last,
A mother-naked man:
She wrapped him in her green mantle,
And sae her true love wan!

"A north wind tore the bent;" truer, finer, pictorial line than this was never written. It expresses perfectly the feeling which, in late autumn, the north-west wind carries to the heart of one passing amid the tossed and withered

* Elritch, unearthly. † Newt.

bent of the moorland. And at night the sound of the resistless wind, doing its work with fell and fatal fury, is the all-possessing impression of the solitary traveller on the moor. With this eerie sound in her ear, and the prospect of the unearthly procession coming on, intangible and mysterious, out of the grey weather-gleam, and the palpitating sense that the fate of her lover was wholly in her hands, how great was the staunch will and the strong courage that were needed for the rescue!

Perhaps in this old tale there lurks a higher moral than we are ready to perceive. Possibly it may point to the struggle, often found so hard, with the repulsive shapes by which the powers of evil are ever ready to interpose between us and what may be our highest, truest good. There is a fine lesson of courage and faith and self-sacrifice, even for us, in the old mythic fairy creed.

The abstraction of mortals from their earthly home, especially of fair maidens, by fairy power, and, in some cases, their forcible rescue, were for long the current subjects of legend and traditional story in the Forest. Down to the time of James Hogg, indeed, and perhaps later, they were even matters of cherished belief. Hogg lived in the transition period between the general acceptance of such a creed, and its partial decay. No side of old legend stirred his untutored imagination more than this; and no Scottish poet has dealt with the power and the realm of Fairy more vividly and impressively than the Bard of

Ettrick. He caught up several of the floating traditions which actually localised the fairy doings, and this, as he haunted the hills and moors where they were said to have taken place, brought the old legend home to his every day life and feeling. He was thus led to an accurate observation and description of the reputed scenes of the story, and of the haunts of the Fairies. These had received only bare mention in the tradition itself, and little more than this even when they had been put into verse in the older time. But all these spots he knew well; many of them were the daily round of the shepherd and his collie. The legends he had learned thus acquired something of the reality which he felt. Hence Hogg's poems of Fairy are remarkable for the fulness, the richness, and the accuracy of the description of the country—of hill, glen, and moor. This was the new or modern element in the Poetry of the Borders. It had been but imperfectly represented in the older Ballads. It was first distinctly brought before the world by Leyden in his *Scenes of Infancy;* and with Hogg this new fresh element of Border literature came in at its best and purest through the localisation of fairy legends.

The best proof and illustration of this appear in the ballad of *Old David* in the *Wake.* "Lochy-Law," Hogg tells us, "where the principal scene of this tale is laid, is a hill on the lands of Shorthope in the wilds of Ettrick. The Fairy Slack is up in the middle of the hill, a very curious ravine, and would be much more so when overshadowed with wood.

The Back-Burn, which joins the Ettrick immediately below this hill, has been haunted from time immemorial, both by the Fairies and the ghost of a wandering minstrel who was cruelly murdered there, and who sleeps in a lone grave a small distance from the ford."*

The burden of the ballad is the story of the rescue of a maiden from fairy power, founded on an old legend of the Forest. The victim is represented as Anne of Raeburn, and the rescuers are Old David Laidlaw of Garwell in Eskdalemuir and his seven sons. By one of these, Owen, the maiden spirited away had been silently beloved. But no one knew whither she had gone; and it was only after David and his sons had broken into the fairy caverns that she was discovered and rescued. The power of the story is, however, in this instance inferior to the pictures of scenery in the Ballad. The old man first saw the fairy pageant at early morn pass o'er "Wonfell's wizard brae" at the head of Eskdale. Then:—

"Fast spur they on through bush and brake;
To Ettrick's woods their course they take.
Old David followed still in view,
Till near the Lochilaw they drew;
There, in a deep and wondrous dell,
Where wandering sun-beam never fell,
Where noon-tide breezes never blew,
From flowers to drink the morning dew;
There, underneath the sylvan shade,
The fairies' spacious bower was made;

* *The Wake*, Note IX.

Its rampart was the tangling sloe,
The bending brier and mistletoe;
And o'er its roof the crooked oak
Waved wildly from the frowning rock.
This wondrous bower, this haunted dell,
The forest shepherd shunn'd as hell!
When sound of fairies' silver horn
Came on the evening breezes borne,
Homeward he fled, nor made a stand,
Thinking the spirits hard at hand.
But when he heard the eldrich swell
Of giggling laugh and bridle bell,
Or saw the riders troop along,
His orisons were loud and strong.
His household fare he yielded free
To this mysterious company."

David and his sons proceed at night to the supposed haunt of this aërial band, and we have the following picture:—

"That evening fell so sweetly still,
So mild on lonely moor and hill,
The little genii of the fell
Forsook the purple heather-bell,
And all their dripping beds of dew,
In wind-flower, thyme, and violet blue;
Aloft their viewless looms they heave,
And dew-webs round the helmets weave.
The waning moon her lustre threw,
Pale round her throne of softened blue;
Her circuit round the southland sky
Was languid, low, and quickly bye;
Leaning on cloud so faint and fair,
And cradled on the golden air;
Modest and pale as maiden bride,
She sank upon the trembling tide."

After slaying the guardian of the cavern—

> "A sprite of dreadful form and air,
> His grizzly beard flowed round his throat
> Like shaggy hair of mountain goat"—

the warriors succeeded in destroying the band, and in rescuing Anne of Raeburn and other captive maidens. And—

> "E'er since, in Ettrick's glens so green,
> Spirits, though there, are seldom seen;
> And fears of Elf and Fairy raid
> Have, like a morning dream, decayed."

In *Kilmeny*, Hogg is at his highest and best; and the inspiration there is the old fairy legend; but it is its purer breath, carrying him into an ideal sphere whose rare and fanciful beauty is shadowed with a weird awe—

> "A land of love, and a land of lychte,
> Withoutten sonne, or mone, or nychte."

Yet even here there is the same careful delineation of the aspects of the natural world out of which the fairy creation arose, and these are so linked with the main personage of the story as to fuse in one the material and the moral—the heart of natural beauty and the soul of purity:—

> "Bonnye Kilmeny gede* up the glen;
> But it wasna to meit Duneira's men,

Nor the rosy munke of the isle to see,
For Kilmeny was pure as pure culde be.
It was only to heir the yorline* syng,
And pu the blew kress flouir round the spring;
To pu the hyp and the hyndberrye,†
And the nitt that hang fra the hesil tree;
For Kilmeny was pure as pure culde be.

* * * * * * * *

Quhan mony lang day had comit and fledde,
Quhan grief grew calm, and hope was dede,
Quhan mess for Kilmeny's soul had beine sung,
Quhan the bedis-man had prayit, and the deide-bell rung;
Lete, lete in ane glomyn, quhan all was still,
Quhan the freenge‡ was reid on the wastlin hill,
The wud was sere, the moon i' the wene,
The reike§ o' the cot hung ouir the playne,
Like ane little wee cludde in the world its lene;
Quhan the ingle lowit‖ with an eiry leme,¶
Lete, lete in the glomyn Kilmeny came heme!
Kilmeny, Kilmeny, quhair haif ye beine?
Long haif we socht baith holt* and deine;†
By lynn,‡ by furde,§ and green wudde tree,
Yet ye ir helsome and fayir to see.
Quhair gat ye that joup‖ of the lille scheine?
That bonny snoode¶ of the byrk sa greine?
And these roses, the fayrist that evir war seine?
Kilmeny, Kilmeny, quhair haif ye beine?"

Then her return to earth is thus ushered in:—

"With distant museke, soft and deipe,
They lullit Kilmeny sunde asleep;

* Yellowhammer. † Either raspberry or brambleberry. ‡ Fringe. § Smoke.
‖ Blazed. ¶ Flame. * Wood. † Hollow.
‡ Pool at the foot of a water-fall, sometimes water-fall itself. § Ford.
‖ Mantle, pelisse. ¶ A fillet for the head, binding up a young woman's hair.

And quhan scho wekinit, scho lay her lene,
An happit with flowris in the greenwud wene.
Quhan seven lang yeiris had cumit and fledde;
Quhan grief was calm, and hope was dede;
Quhan scarce was rememberit Kilmeny's name,
Lete, lete in a glomyn Kilmeny cam heme!"

The association of the perfect purity of womanhood with the flowers and the music of the greenwood, with the sparkle of the stream, and with the pathos of the gloamin', is a conception as happy and as happily executed as any in simple and natural, that is, in the best poetry. The Shepherd had meditated the legends on the moorland, until they became a part of himself, and of the ground he trod; he was thus able to picture the real features of the scene, and, inspired by the intensity of his feeling, to rise to the unique ideal which he more or less perfectly expressed, and which only one under the impulses of his training and circumstances could even have conceived. This is the main reason why the Shepherd of the Forest escapes the inflated and the artistically unreal whenever he deals with fairy scenes.

The fancy which evoked the fairy form from the spreading upland and moor lived on in Scottish poetry for many an age. Latterly it located the spirit of the moorland, when he came to live alone, in the grey stone-circles and in the rocking stones which form picturesque and noticeable features on the Lowland hills—prehistoric remains,

round which historic tradition and legend have grown. Seldom has the weird fancy been better put than by Leyden in the *Cout of Keeldar*. The knight, heedless of the warning dream of his wife, has ridden through the dawn up the southern slope of the Cheviots to the "Redswire dun." There unawares he evokes by his bugle blast the unearthly and irritated shape which presaged his fate ere the close of day :—

"And when he reached the Redswire high,
His bugle Keeldar blew;
And round did float, with clamorous note
And scream, the hoarse curlew.

The next blast that young Keeldar blew,
The wind grew deadly still;
But the sleek ferns, with fingery leaves,
Waved wildly o'er the hill.

The third blast that young Keeldar blew,
Still stood the limber fern;
And a Wee Man of swarthy hue,
Upstarted by a cairn.

His russet weeds were brown as heath,
That clothes the upland fell;
And the hair of his head was frizzly red,
As the purple heather-bell.

An urchin,* clad in prickles red,
Clung cowering to his arm;
The hounds they howled, and backward fled,
As struck by Fairy charm.

* Hedgehog.

'Why rises high the stag-hound's cry,
Where stag-hound ne'er should be?
Why wakes that horn the silent morn,
Without the leave of me?"

'Brown Dwarf, that o'er the moorland strays,
Thy name to Keeldar tell!'
'The Brown Man of the muir who stays
Beneath the heather-bell.

''Tis sweet beneath the heather-bell,
To live in Autumn brown;
And sweet to hear the lav'rocks swell,
Far, far from tower and town.

'But woe betide the shrilling horn,
The chase's surly cheer!
And ever that hunter is forlorn,
Whom first at morn I hear.'

Says 'Weal nor woe, nor friend nor foe,
In thee we hope or dread.'
But, ere the bugles green could blow,
The Wee Brown Man had fled.

And onward, onward, hound and horse,
Young Keeldar's band have gone;
And soon they wheel, in rapid course,
Around the Keeldar stone.

Green vervain round its base did creep,
A powerful seed that bore;
And oft, of yore, its channels deep
Were stained with human gore.

And still, when blood-drops, clotted thin,
Hang the gray moss upon,

The spirit murmurs from within,
And shakes the rocking-stone.

Around, around, young Keeldar wound,
And call'd in scornful tone,
With him to pass the barrier ground,
The Spirit of the Stone.

The rude crag rock'd, 'I come for death,
I come to work thy woe!'
And 'twas the Brown Man of the Heath,
That murmured from below."

The spirit of solitude and silence on the uplands—the spirit that loves and guards the gentle creatures of the wilds—wroth at intrusion, at heedless sport, and thoughtless slaughter, is felt to rise up here in rebuke and revenge. The Brown Man of the Heath has perhaps in him a more malignant nature than Pan of old, but he, too, would suddenly express his irritation at a break of the dreamful stillness of the noon-day tide:—

"I durst not, shepherd, O I durst not pipe
At noon-tide; fearing Pan, who at that hour
Rests from the toils of hunting. Harsh is he;
Wrath at his nostrils aye sits sentinel."*

Besides witchcraft there were two forms of supernatural power. The one was that of the "Magus," or Magician,

§ Theocritus, *Idyll*, I. (Calverley's Version). The last line is very fine:—

ἐντὶ δὲ πικρός,
καὶ οἱ ἀεὶ δριμεῖα χολὰ ποτὶ ῥινὶ κάθηται.

who could command the spirits or fiends of the other world, and bend them to his purposes. The other was that of the Wizard, or necromancer, who was simply in league with those spirits, and from whom he could borrow assistance in his designs and purposes. To the Borderer, Michael Scott of Oakwood was the type of the one, and apparently Gifford of Yester the type of the other. The repute of the power of Michael Scott, or "auld Michael," as he was popularly called, hovered as a shadow over the Lowlands for more than five hundred years. His magical function was no mere phantom of the imagination. It was thoroughly believed in among the dwellers in the vales of the Teviot, the Ettrick, and the Yarrow, down to very recent times. That he could and did control restless fiends was the faith of the Borderer for many a generation. That he spoke words which cleft the Eildons in three was a mythic exaggeration—hardly a popular belief. But when

"Master Michael Scott's man
Sought bread and gat nane"

from the churlish farmer's wife, and, through the magic rune, the wife, husband, and servants were all set dancing wildly round his enchanted bonnet—this was thoroughly accepted as genuine by the peasantry for many an age. The exploit was regarded by them as quite within the limits of warlock power; as the punishment for the inhospitality was held to be well deserved.

The First and Second cantos of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* owe their singular impressiveness mainly to this old inspiration. The poet fuses together two classes of recognised supernatural powers—the personifications of nature, the spirits residing and moving in river and fell—and the "Magus," or controller of restless and tricky fiends, represented by Michael Scott and symbolised in his hidden "book of might." The Lady of Buccleuch of the time, vulgarly reputed to be addicted to witchcraft, was a Bethune or Beaton of wizard ancestry; and she was supposed mysteriously to commune with the unseen powers of nature and of the infernal world, who now and again would murmur dimly around the tower of Branksome. She was now the widow of Sir Walter Scott, whom his illustrious namesake has glorified, not very deservedly. For he was one who is found security for the perpetrators of more deeds of violence and cowardly bloodshed than any other name in the criminal annals of the time. He met his death at the hands of the Kers on the High Street of Edinburgh in 1552—in revenge for the slaughter of the Laird of Cessford at Halyden, near Melrose, by an Elliot, retainer of Buccleuch. His widow, the Lady Buccleuch, was popularly believed to have lent her influence to lead Mary to a part in the murder of Darnley. Men and women associated with such deeds must needs look for dark endings and times of sorrow. The truly heroic thing about them is when they bear their fates well.

Scott thus powerfully puts the weird situation :—

"Of noble race the Lady came,
Her father was a clerk of fame,
Of Bethune's line of Picardie :
He learned the art that none may name,
In Padua, far beyond the sea.
Men said he changed his mortal frame,
By feat of magic mystery :
For when in studious mood he paced
St. Andrew's cloistered hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall.

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound,
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's red side?
Is it the wind that swings the oaks?
Is it the echo from the rocks?
What may it be, the heaving sound,
That moans old Branksome's turrets round?

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs bay and howl;
And from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.
In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night,
But the night was still and clear.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,
From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
From the sullen echo of the rock,
From the voice of the coming storm,
The Ladye knew it well!
It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke
And he called on the Spirit of the Fell.

River Spirit—

'Sleep'st thou, brother?'

Mountain Spirit—

'Brother, nay—
On my hills the moonbeams play,
From Craikcross to Skelfhill Pen,
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morris pacing,
To aërial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!'

River Spirit—

'Tears of an imprisoned maiden
Mix with my polluted stream;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars?
What shall be the maiden's fate?
Who shall be the maiden's mate?'

Mountain Spirit—

'Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
In utter darkness, round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star;
Ill may I read their high decree!
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
Till pride be quell'd, and love be free.'"

It will be admitted that the last word of the old mountain mythology was a noble lesson, well needed when supposed to be uttered, and true for all time. The other stanzas in which the widowed Lady of Buccleuch is depicted as having recourse to the power and formulæ of the dead magician of the name, are well known as among the grandest of Scott's delineations.

Another form of supernatural power which affected the belief and actions of the Lowland Scot was Witchcraft. This was as thoroughly believed for hundreds of years on the Borders, and indeed over Scotland generally, as any form of the supernatural could possibly be. It was, of course, no new or special belief. It was known to Hebrew, Greek and Roman. It was doubtless an ancestral tradition which the Teuton inherited from his wide-spread Aryan forefathers. Not only the people, but the Church, the Courts of Law—all the culture of the country—accepted witches and witchcraft as an unquestionable power. The trials for this crime, as given

in Scottish records, show some most extraordinary features. Men and women who had to all appearance lived blamelessly, and observant of all the ordinary duties of life, are found suddenly to be struck, as it were, by a supernatural power, related, at least after Christianity spread in the country, to a diabolic origin, which bound and constrained them to frequent nightly orgies, in which the awsome, the ludicrous, and the repulsive are mingled together in the most outrageous fashion. "The Confessions," as they are called, of the parties to the Devil's bond, given sometimes under torture, sometimes freely, contain dark and gruesome touches which it seems almost impossible for human imagination to conceive.

But, while the Border Ballads contain numerous references to enchantments, and even sorcery, the witch or wizard is not directly portrayed. Nor is the wielder of this supernatural power a favourite with the older singers. The power itself was felt to be so painfully real for the time, so little matter of the past or of the ideal, that its repulsiveness alone was its prevailing feature. And the conception of a dread power of this sort, generally, nay wholly, malignant, as dwelling in a fellow-creature, and inspired in him or her by Satanic agency, was an obvious source of terror. It further appeared as such an absolute perversion and disfigurement of the image of God in man, that popular poetry shrunk from it as a subject even of delineation. It is introduced in a few of the Ballads, but in such a way as to show

that it was a thing to be loathed and got rid of, even by supposing the action of more beneficent supernatural powers of another type. In *Willie's Lady*, for example, the lady is witch-bound by his hellish mother, and the key to her power is got from her by a stratagem. In *Alison Gross*, a witch who turned a scornful lover into a worm or snake that crawled about a tree, the spell is broken on Halloween by a beneficent Fairy.

It was not until witchcraft had become, at least among the educated classes, a belief of the past, that it rose to the rank of a theme of poetic delineation. And then it was the quaint and picturesque, often awsome scenes of nightly revel, which attracted the poet. But when this was so—when memory came to mellow the past, and imagination raised the element of dread from the actual to the ideal—James Hogg was able, in his *Witch of Fife*, notwithstanding much that is rough and unartistic in details, to sway the emotions by a series of pictures as eerie, wild, and fanciful as anything in modern literature :—

"The first leet-night,* whan the new moon set,
Whan all was douffe† and mirk,
We saddled our naigis wi the moon-fern leaf,
And rode fra Kilmerrin Kirk.

Some horses were of the brume-cow‡ framit,
And some of the green bay-tree ;
But mine was made of ane humloke§ shaw,
And a stout stallion was he !

* Allotted night. † Dull to the eye, thick. ‡ Broom bush. § Hemlock.

We raid the tod* doune on the hill,
The martin† on the law,
And we hunted the hoolet‡ out of brethe,
And forcit him doune to fa'!

And aye we raid, and sae merrily we raid,
Throw the merkist§ gloffis‖ of the night;
And we swam the floods, and we darnit¶ the woods,
Till we cam to the Lomond height.

And when we cam to the Lomond height,
Sae blythlye we lychtid doune;
And we drank fra the horns that never grew,
The beer that was never browin.*

Than up there rose ane wee wee man,
Franethe† the moss-gray stane;
His face was wan like the coliflowre,
For he nouthir had blude nor bane.

He set ane reed-pipe till his muthe,‡
And he playit sae bonnily,
Till the grey curlew, and the black cock flew
To listen his melody.

It rang so sweet through the green Lomond,
That the nycht-wind lowner§ blew;
And it soupit‖ alang the Loch Leven,
And wakinit the white sea-mew.

It rang sae sweet through the green Lomond,
Sae sweetly but and sae shill,¶

* Fox. † Ringtail kite. ‡ Owl. § Darkest.

‖ A sudden change of temperature in the sensations of the individual, generally of heat; here, outwardly, spots of darkness denser to the eye than in other parts of the atmosphere.

¶ Threaded. * Brewed. † From beneath. ‡ Mouth.
§ More stilly. ‖ Swept. ¶ Shrill.

That the wezilis laup* out of their mouldy† holis,
And danc'd on the midnight hill.

The corby craw cam gledgin‡ near,
The erne gaed veering bye;
And the trout laup out of the Leven Loch,
Charmit with the melody.

And aye we dancit on the green Lomond,
Till the dawn on the ocean grew;
Nae wonder I was a weary wycht,
When I cam hame to you."

Still more impressive is the picture of the second night's work:—

"The second night, when the new moon set,
O'er the roaring sea we flew;
The cockle-shell our trusty bark,
Our sails of the green sea-rue.

And the bauld winds blew, and the fire flauchts flew,
And the sea ran to the sky,
And the thunner it growlit, and the sea dogs howlit,
And we gaed scouring bye.

And aye we mountit the sea-green hills,
Quhill we brushit thro' the cluds of the hevin;
Than sousit downright like the stern-shot light,
Fra the liftis blue casement driven.

And when to the Norway shore we wan,§
We muntid our steeds of the wind,

* Leapt. † Earthy. ‡ Looking asquint or slily.
§ Got to, or arrived at.

And we splashit the flood, and we darnit the wood,
And we left the shore behinde.

* * * * * * * *

And when we cam to the Lapland lone,
The fairies war all in array,
For all the genii of the north
War keeping their holiday.

The warlock men and the weird women,
And the fays of the wood and the steep,
And phantom hunters all were there,
And the mermaids of the deep.

And they washit us all with the witch-water,
Distill'd fra the moorland dew,
Quhill our beauty blumit like the Lapland rose,
That wild in the forest grew."*

There is one other form of supernatural power which deeply influenced the life and feeling of the past in the Borders. This was the belief and expectancy on the part of the living of a return of the dead to earth. The Lowland Scot has always had a strong conviction that the grave formed no real break in the continuity of the essential life of man. He only passed from the visible to the invisible, and might naturally take an interest in the affairs and in the people of the world he had left. Hence the simple unastonished realism with which all the Ballads referring to a

* *The Queen's Wake.* While preserving all the Scotch words in these extracts, I have not adhered to Hogg's affectation in the spelling, or rather misspelling, of modern words.

return from the dead are strongly characterised. This is manifest in the ordinary treatment which the spirits receive, and the preparations made for them after their return, as if they were still mortals merely come back for a season to the scenes of their temporary earthly pilgrimage. The Ballad of *The Wife of Usher's Well* brings out all these points with striking emphasis. It was a daring wish, that of the bereaved mother, but it had its weird power:—

"'I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fishes* in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood.'

It fell about the Martinmass,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o' the birk.

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh;
But at the gates of Paradise,
That birk grew fair eneugh.

'Blow up the fire, my maidens!
Bring water from the well!
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well.'

And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide;
And she's ta'en her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

* Possibly fashes, or troubles.

Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the grey;
The eldest to the youngest said,
'Tis time we were away.'

The cock he hadna crawed but ance,
And clapp'd his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
'Brother, we must awa'.

'The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channering* worm doth chide;
Gin we be mist out o' our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.

'Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre!
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass,
That kindles my mother's fire.'"

There is a fine touch of human continuity in the nature of the spirits as conveyed in the last two lines.

Scott caught up the conception of a return from the grave; and just because it had been made so powerful before, he was enabled, according to the law of poetic progress, to add to its impressiveness. In the *Eve of St. John*—that type and forecast of what was grandest in his imaginative genius—he introduces the spirit of the dead—of the slain knight who was lying in his bloody grave; and with what terrible power! It is a return from the grave, not merely for purposes of awe and eeriness, but to rebuke lawless love, to

* Fretting.

sanction moral order and purity, to brand with supernatural sign the guilty hand, to tell also of the sacredness of human life, with all the impressiveness of one who had been admitted into the unseen world, and there learnt fully and intimately the eternal order of right and wrong—the certainty of a Power of Righteousness which the perplexing facts of this world tend, in some respects, to shroud in darkness and in doubt. The first scene—the meeting on the Beacon Hill of the Lady with the knight whom she still supposed to be in the flesh—is entirely within the limits of the older minstrelsy :—

"My lady, each night, sought the lonely light,
That burns on the wild watchfold ;
For, from height to height, the beacons bright,
Of the English foemen told.

The bittern clamoured from the moss,
The wind blew loud and shrill ;
Yet the craggy pathway she did cross
To the eiry Beacon Hill.

I watch'd her steps, and silent came
Where she sat her on a stone :
No watchman stood by the dreary flame,
It burned all alone.

The second night I kept her in sight,
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary's might ! an Armed Knight
Stood by the lonely flame.

And many a word that war-like lord,
Did speak to my lady there;
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,
And I heard not what they were.

The third night there the sky was fair,
And the mountain-blast was still,
As again I watch'd the secret pair,
On the lonesome Beacon Hill."

Then follows the passionate request of the Lady for the midnight meeting in her bower with the seemingly living Knight. This scene is a mere appeal to the pictorial imagination on its strongly emotional side, to the feeling that springs from the thought of contact with the ghostly form of one returned from the dead; and the accessories of the situation are inexpressibly powerful. Except in artistic skill, Scott has not yet advanced beyond the sphere of the older minstrelsy. His picturing is more elaborate, but the older minstrels reached precisely the same effect by brief picturing and even single epithet. But the scene which follows, where the apparition appears in the Lady's Bower, and gradually reveals his true character, touches certain moral feelings which it was not within the sphere of the older writers to quicken in the heart, or at least embody in distinct expression. To a simple direct realism of treatment, which might suggest the moral feeling, but did not expressly convey it, Scott now adds a new element. He speaks out the lesson clearly and explicitly, and at the

same time sacrifices nothing of imaginative impressiveness:—

"The lady looked through the chamber fair,
By the light of a dying flame;
And she was aware of a Knight stood there,
Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

'Alas! away, away!' she cried,
'For the holy Virgin's sake!'
'Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side,
But, lady, he will not awake.

By Eildon Tree for long nights three,
In bloody grave have I lain;
The mass and the death prayer are said for me,
But, lady, they are said in vain.

By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair strand,
Most foully slain, I fell;
And my restless sprite on the Beacon's height
For a space is doomed to dwell.

At our trysting-place for a certain space,
I must wander to and fro;
But I had not had power to come to thy bower,
Had'st thou not conjured me so.'

Love mastered fear—her brow she cross'd;
'How, Richard, hast thou sped?
And art thou saved, or art thou lost?'
The vision shook his head.

'Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life;
So bid thy lord believe:
That lawless love is guilt above,
This awful sign receive.'

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam,
  His right upon her hand;
The lady shrunk and fainting sunk,
  For it scorch'd like fiery brand.

The sable score, of fingers four,
  Remains on that board impress'd;
And for evermore that lady wore
  A covering on her wrist."

These stanzas point to a very difficult conclusion, and contain a much higher strain of poetry, than do the verses, eerie and touching as they are, of *The Wife of Usher's Well.*

In *The Gay Goss Hawk,* a ballad of the Yarrow, we have the type of the romantic in both its forms. The gay goss-hawk of the Scottish lord holds a colloquy with him, and carries a letter under its "pinion gray" to his sweetheart in the south. It does all for him that a creature endowed with supernatural power can do. And then there is the stratagem of the lady—she drinks the sleeping potion, and lies for dead, after having requested to be carried to Scotland, and to be allowed to lie a night before burial in St. Mary's Kirk. The test to which she is subjected by the step-mother is as rigid as could be conceived:—

"Then spak her cruel step-minnie,
  'Tak ye the burning lead,
And drap a drap on her bosome,
  To try if she be dead.'

They took a drap o' boiling lead,
  And drapped it on her breast;

'Alas! alas!' her father cried,
'She's dead without the priest.'

She neither chattered with her teeth,
Nor shivered with her chin;
'Alas! alas!' her father cried,
'There is nae breath within."

After this she is carried for dead by her seven brothers up far from the southern land, on the oaken bier lined with silver, and amid a sweet soft music of bells hanging from her kell or shroud. And, according to her last request, she is laid for a night in St. Mary's Kirk. Church bells had tolled for her, and masses had been said and sung along the way by which the bier had been borne. And there in St. Mary's Forest Kirk she lay all night, white-robed for burial; but on the morn, when the dead bell stirred the echoes of the hills, and when we can imagine sweet faced maidens from the glens were clustering round the bier of the marvellous lady from the south, touched with pity for one so young and fair, her lover appeared to look upon the face of her who had died for him and would in death be carried to his, the land of the North. Then, suddenly, at the touch of his hand—

"She brightened like the lily flower,
Till her pale colour was gone;
With rosy cheik and ruby lip,
She smiled her love upon."

Of the Historical Ballads, the two which refer to the oldest historical times and incidents are *Auld Maitland*, and

The Battle of Otterbourne. The former, which was taken down from the recitation of the mother of James Hogg, expresses thoroughly the Lowland feeling of opposition and hatred to Edward I. of England. Notwithstanding the opinion of Aytoun and Maidment, that this ballad is a modern one, there seems to me to be sufficient evidence of its being in the main an old composition. It consists of two parts, the one describing the siege of Auld Maitland's tower, the other detailing the chivalrous and romantic exploits of his three sons against Edward's army in France. There is no historical incident on record which corresponds to either of the parts. But Maitland himself—

"Maitland with his auld beard gray"—

is a quite definite historical character, and his exploits are known to have been the subject of popular romance long prior to the time of Gawain Douglas. He was laird of Thirlestane on the Leader in the thirteenth century, before and up to the period of the War of Independence. And the defence of his house against a band of southerners at that period is quite a probable occurrence. The narrative of the ballad has all the directness, sense of reality, and pictorial power, characteristic in general of the old and genuine historical ballads. What a picture is given in the single stanza, which describes the descent of the English upon the country—

"They lighted on the banks of Tweed,
And blew their coals sae het,

And fired the Merse and Teviotdale,
All in an evening late."

That word *fired*, not burned, speaks of the glow of the flame as present to the very eye of the Minstrel. And what an account of literalness and truth, and of quiet heroism have we here :—

"As they fared up o'er Lammermore,
They burned baith up and down,
Until they came to a darksome house,
Some call it Leader-Town.

'Wha hauds this house?' young Edward cried,
'Or wha gies't ower to me?'—
A gray-hair'd knight set up his head,
And crackit richt crousely :

'Of Scotland's King I haud my house,
He pays me meat and fee ;
And I will keep my guid auld house,
While my house will keep me.'"

Then comes the siege, but the result of it all is :—

"Full fifteen days that braid host lay,
Sieging Auld Maitland keen,
Syne they have left him, hail and feir,
Within his strength of stane."

The exploits of the youths, though very bold, are of the usual sort in the days of romantic chivalry.* But the Lowland hate of the southerner comes out in this verse. One of the

* See the *Ballad*, in the *Minstrelsy*, I., p. 316.

young Maitlands has thrown young Edward to the ground, and he is offered three earldoms to let him free:—

> "It's ne'er be said in France, nor e'er
> In Scotland, when I'm hame,
> That Edward once lay under me,
> And e'er gat up again!"

The Battle of Otterbourne is the grandest of Scottish Ballads, alike in chivalry of action, and in power of impression, through the simplest means. The incident it records is quite historical, and the antiquity and genuineness of the Ballad itself are above suspicion.* In August, 1388, James Earl of Douglas made a raid into Northumberland, laid waste a great part of the district, and finally confronted Henry Percy, well known as Hotspur, in the New Castle where he lay. It is said that there, in a hand-to-hand encounter before the castle, as was the fashion of the times, the Douglas won the pennon of Percy, and declared he would carry it as a trophy to his house of Dalkeith. Percy swore he should never accomplish that. The Scots under Douglas on their way northwards were overtaken by Percy, or, according to the account of the ballad, met by appointment, at Otterbourne. The field of Otterbourne lies well down in Northumberland, in the valley of the Reed Water, a tributary of the Tyne, about

* See Percy's Notes to the older or English version of the poem in *The Reliques*. For the Scottish Ballad see Scott, *Minstrelsy*, I., 345.

thirty-two miles north-west of Newcastle. It is about twelve miles south of the Carterfell and the Reidswire, where the water has its source. It is a famous spot even on those southern slopes and spurs of the Cheviots, which contain the scenes of more deeds of daring and personal prowess than any other locality in Britain.

The quiet hamlet of Otterbourne is the first the traveller meets with when, after crossing the Carterfell at the Reidswire, he passes down Reedsdale, which in all its features of hill and glen is another Yarrow. There is an English feeling about the small village as it lies sheltered and overshadowed by its stately trees, with the river passing behind it. No one would surmise that its summer peace had ever been broken by the fierce cry of conflict. The brook of Otterbourne crosses the road and passes through the village. Following the rivulet northwards one comes to a stretch of benty upland that extends from the Fawdoun Hill for two miles westwards, to a ridge that runs down to the present public road through the valley of the Reed. On that benty upland did the fight of Otterbourne rage through that August night till morning. The position of the combatants is distinct enough. Percy, after having lost his pennon before Newcastle, went straight to Alnwick, and there collected his men. He crossed Cocquet Dale and pushed onwards by the dark heights to the north-east of Otterbourne, intending to place himself between the Scots and the Border. And he succeeded in this. Descending

from the Blake Law on the evening of the 15th of August, he found Douglas and his band on the slopes of Fawdoun Hill on the east side of the Otterbourne. Percy was now between them and their line of retreat up through the Reed to the Reidswire. This rather indicates that the Scots were surprised, as is said in one version of the Ballad. Though it was nightfall when Percy reached the ground, he commenced the attack at once by a shower of arrows from the English crossbows. At first the Scots were driven back, suffering severely. But, as the night advanced, the crossbowmen could take no accurate aim, and the fight became a hand-to-hand encounter. It continued all through the moonlit night until dawn:—

> "And the calm moon from heavenly height
> Leant down with gentle face,
> Saw fierce strife rage beneath her light,
> Yet spread o'er helm of outstretched knight
> A weird unearthly grace."

Gradually the Scots pressed their antagonists westwards in a line along the valley of the Reed. Fully a mile and a half from where the battle began, the Douglas fell. The spot is marked by what is inappropriately called "Percy's Cross," and it is now surrounded by a small plantation. But the real spot, and the one originally marked by the Cross, was about seventy-three yards north-east of its present site. When Douglas fell, the Scots had driven

their opponents on to, and nearly across, the western ridge of the moor, thus forcing their way onwards to the line of the Border. They finally succeeded, carrying Percy and his brother captive. The accounts as to the number of men engaged on both sides vary. But a recent discovery made at Elsdon Church, about three miles distant from the scene of conflict, may be regarded as throwing some light on the slaughter. There skulls to the amount of a thousand have been disinterred, all lying together. They are of lads in their teens, and of middle aged men; but there are no skulls of old men, or of women. Not improbably these are the dead of Otterbourne.

The opening of the Ballad is very picturesque; and the mode of marking the time of the year could have occurred only to a native minstrel:—

"It fell about the Lammas tide,
When the muir-men win their hay,
The doughty Douglas bound him to ride,
Into England to drive a prey.

He chose the Gordons and the Græmes,
With them the Lindesays, light and gay,
But the Jardines wald not with him ride,
And they rue it to this day.

And he has burned the dales of Tyne,
And part of Bambrough shire,
And three good towers on Reidswire fells,
He left them all on fire."

Then there is the hand-to-hand combat at Newcastle, and the appointment to meet at Otterbourne:—

"They lighted high on Otterbourne,
Upon the bent sae brown;
They lighted high on Otterbourne,
And threw their pallions down."

The Douglas went into the fight with the memory of a dream of heavy omen, yet with undaunted heart:—

"But I have dreamed a dreary dream,
Beyond the Isle of Skye;
I saw a dead man win a field,
And I wot that man was I."

The English Ballad thus finely and naturally describes the meeting on the field of Percy and Douglas:—

"The Percy and the Douglas mette,
That ether of other was fayne;
They schapped together whyll that they swette,
With swords of fine Collayne,*
Tyll the blood from their bassonets ran,
As the brooke doth in the rayne."

Just as day broke the Douglas received his death-wound; then there occur the following stanzas, which for power and simple pathos are unsurpassed in Ballad literature:—

"'My nephew good,' the Douglas said,
What recks the death of ane!

* Cologne steel.

Last night I dreamed a dreary dream,
And I ken the day's thy ain.

'My wound is deep, I fain would sleep;
Take thou the vanguard of the three,
And hide me by the bracken bush,
That grows on yonder lilye lee.

'O bury me by the bracken bush,
Beneath the blooming brier,
Let never living mortal ken,
That e'er a kindly Scot lies here.'

He lifted up that noble lord
Wi' the saut tear in his ee,
He hid him in the bracken bush,
That his merrie-men might not see.

The moon was clear, the day drew near,
The spears in flinders* flew,
But many a gallant Englishman
Ere day the Scotsmen slew.

The Gordons good, in English blood,
They steep'd their hose and shoon;
The Lindsays flew like fire about,
Till all the fray was done."

The English version has preserved for us a brief picture of the sequel of the fight, which is the very heart of pathos:—

"Then one the morne they mayd them beeres,†
Of birch and haysell graye;
Mony a wydowe with wepyng teyres
Their makes‡ they fetch awaye."

* Splinters. † Biers. ‡ Mates.

Though the Douglas was "hid" 'neath the bracken bush, he was finally carried to Melrose, and there buried beside the High Altar, with the banner which had been unfurled in the stour of many an onset drooping mournfully over him :—

"Full many a scutcheon and banner riven,
Shook to the cold night wind of heaven,
Around the screened altar's pale;
And there the dying lamps did burn,
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant chief of Otterburne!
And thine, dark knight of Liddesdale!
O fading honours of the dead!
O high ambition lowly laid!"*

If anything could add to the touching nature of those lines of the old Ballad, it is a memorable incident in the life of Sir Walter Scott himself. After his strength was well broken, he, along with Lockhart, took a journey by Yair, Innerleithen, Peebles, and Drochil Castle on to Douglas, to see once more the ancient stronghold of the race "whose coronet often counterpoised the crown." He wished to depict it in *Castle Dangerous*. There, looking on the grand old ruin, a thousand memories rushed on his brain, and in tears he broke forth in the words of the dying Douglas—feeling, perhaps, that the soldier's case was his own :—

"My wound is deep, I fain would sleep;
Take thou the vanguard of the three,

* Percy's pennon is still preserved in the family of Douglas of Cavers, the descendant of Earl Douglas.

And bury me by the bracken bush,
That grows on yonder lilye lee.

Oh! bury me by the bracken bush,
Beneath the blooming brier,
Let never living mortal ken
That e'er a kindly Scot lies here."

The other great historical ballad is *The Raid of the Reidswire.* The occurrence which it celebrates was a sudden outbreak between the two companies which attended the English and Scottish Wardens of the Marches, Forster of Bamborough and Carmichael of Hyndford, at a meeting on the Borders for the adjustment of claims. Forster and Carmichael came to high words regarding a bill which had been "fouled" or proved correct against an English freebooter. The fierce Borderers of Tynedale, noticing the altercation between the leaders, broke the truce by discharging a shower of arrows, when the combat became general. It ended in the retreat of the English party, Forster himself and others being taken prisoners. The date is June 7th, 1575. The chief interest of the ballad lies in the curtness and picturesqueness of the story, and in the list of the names of the families engaged in it.

The *Fray of Suport* and *Jamie Telfer o' the Fair Dodhead* are the two ballads typical of a Border call and warning to follow the reivers when driving away the stolen cattle. Anything more fierce and savage in tone than the *Fray of Suport* can hardly be conceived. It is put into

the mouth of a woman who had lost her all, and it seems as if her passions were so strong as to overleap all trammels of verse. A few lines will suffice:—

"But Peenye, my gude son, is out at the Hagbut-head,
His een glittering for anger like a fiery gleed;*
Crying—'Mak sure the nooks
Of Maky's-muir crooks;
For the wily Scot takes by nooks, hooks, and crooks.
Gin we meet a' together in a head the morn,
We'll be merry men.'
Fy, lads! shout a' a' a' a' a',
My gear's a' gane.

* * * * * * * *

Captain Musgrave and a' his band,
Are coming down by the Siller-strand,
And the muckle toun bell o' Carlisle is rung:
My gear was a' weel won,
And before it's carried o'er the Border,
Mony a man's gae down.
Fy, lads! shout a' a' a' a' a',
My gear's a' gane."

Jamie Telfer o' the Fair Dodhead tells its story with a sense of realism so strong as to suggest that it was the composition of an eye-witness of the retrieving foray. Jamie inhabited a lone tower—the Dodhead—near Singlee, on the Ettrick. The Captain of Bewcastle and his band beset it one night:—

"And when they came to the Fair Dodhead,
Richt hastily they clamb the Peel;

* A glowing coal, or bar of iron.

They loosed the kye out, ane and a',
And ranshackled* the house richt weel.

Now Jamie Telfer's heart was sair,
The tear aye rowing in his ee;
He pled wi' the Captain to hae his gear,
Or else revenged he would be.

The Captain turned him round and leugh,†
Said:—'Man, there's naething in thy house,
But ae auld sword without a sheath,
That hardly now would fell a mouse.'

The sun wasna up, but the moon was down,
It was the gryming‡ of a new fa'n snaw,
Jamie Telfer has run ten miles afoot,
Between the Dodhead and the Stob's Ha'.§

And when he cam to the fair tower gate,
He shouted loud and cried weel hie,
Till out spak auld Gibby Elliot,
Wha's this that brings the fraye to me?"

But Elliot would not respond to the call. The plundered man then turned to the Teviot side. There he found sympathy in "auld Buccleuch," who thus spoke:—

"'Alack for wae!' quoth the gude auld Lord,
'And ever my heart is wae for thee!
But fye gar cry on Willie, my son,
And see that he come to me speedilie!

'Gar warn the water, braid and wide,
Gar warn it sune and hastilie!

* Ransacked. † Laughed. ‡ Sprinkling. § Stobs Hall on the Slitterick.

They that winna ride for Jamie Telfer's kye,
Let them never look in the face o' me!

'Warn Wat o' Harden and his sons,
Wi' them will Borthwick water ride;
Warn Gaudilands* and Allan Haugh,
And Gilmanscleugh and Commonside.

'Ride by the gate at Priesthaughswire,
And warn the Currors o' the Lee;
As ye come down the Hermitage Slack,
Warn doughtie Willie o' Gorrinberry.'

The Scotts they rode, the Scotts they ran,
Sae starkly and sae steadily!
And aye the ower-word o' the thrang
Was:—'Rise for Branksome readilie!'"

The Scots soon overtook Bewcastle, who refused to deliver up "the kye." Then there follows a picture set in the simplest terms, which no art can improve:—

"'Set on them, lads,' quo' Willie then;
'Fye, lads, set on them cruellie!
For ere they come to Ritterford,
Many a toom† saddle there sall be!'

Then til't they gaed, wi' heart and hand,
The blows fell thick as bickering hail;
And mony a horse ran masterless,
And mony a comely cheek was pale.

But Willie was stricken ower the head,
And thro' the knapscap‡ the sword has gane;

* Goldielands. † Empty. ‡ Headpiece.

And Harden grat for very rage,
When Willie on the grund lay slane.

But he's taen aff his gude steel cap,
And thrice he's waved it in the air,
The Dinlay* snaws were ne'er mair white
Nor† the lyart locks of Harden's hair.

'Revenge! Revenge!' auld Wat 'gan cry;
'Fye, lads, lay on them cruellie,
We'll ne'er see Teviotside again,
Or Willie's death revenged sall be.'

O mony a horse ran masterless,
The splinter'd lances flew on hie;
But or they won to the Kershope ford,
The Scotts had gotten the victory."

The whole spirit of the old Border life is there, in its fidelity to clanship, its ready daring, its fierceness of fight and fence, its delight in romantic deeds, and, withal, in its heart of pathos. The power and truth of individual manhood were never more thoroughly tested than in the wild grips of a Border raid.

There are naturally Ballads of rescue of clansmen taken prisoners, and lodged generally in the castle of what to them must have appeared rather ironically called "merrie Carlisle." The chief of these is *Kinmont Willie*, relating to Armstrong of Kinmont, whose rescue during the night from Carlisle Castle took place on April 13th, 1596. There are, besides, the ballads that narrate the deliverance of the

* A Liddesdale Hill. † Than.

famous Jock of the Syde, and that of Archie of Ca'field, the latter from the Tolbooth of Dumfries. Jock o' the Syde is mentioned by Sir Richard Maitland in his invective.* He lived and, no doubt, "flourished" during the reign of Mary and part of that of James VI. He was an Armstrong, and nephew of the head of the name, the Laird of Mangerton. In 1569 he assisted the northern Lords—Northumberland and Westmoreland—to conceal themselves among the Border glens, after their unfortunate rising. His rescue from Carlisle Castle took place after 1590, when Thomas Lord Scroop of Bolton became, in succession to his father, Warden of the West Marches of England. Jock o' the Syde had two worthy relatives, as remarkable as himself in his profession—viz., his cousin, the Laird's Jock, or the Laird's son Jock, this being the son of Mangerton, and Christie of the Syde, his brother. These names all appear as men of note in the list of Border clans of 1597. The Syde was a tower in Liddesdale, a little way down from the junction of the Hermitage Water.

The Ballads of rescue have a marked family likeness in structure and incident, and are probably due to the same author, one who lived in the time of James VI., and who wrote before the Union of the Crowns. The daring shown by Buccleuch in the rescue of Kinmont Willie spread his name over Britain and the Continent. It was held, besides, to be morally justifiable, on the ground that Kinmont had

* See *supra*, p. 296.

been seized on a day of Border truce, and was illegally detained. The arrangement of the expedition, the meeting of the band at Woodhouselee an hour before sunset, the march through the night, the quiet breaking of the Castle, the alarm in the city of Carlisle, the tolling of the bells and the beating of the drums there, with the successful carrying away of the captive and the re-crossing of the flooded Eden in the dawn of the misty morning—are graphically touched, and make a stirring epic picture. And the whole is relieved by a touch of humour thoroughly characteristic of the bold life which delighted in a deed of daring and of danger, and found relief from the strain of the effort in the readiest joke. Kinmont Willie, fettered as he was, was hoisted on Red Rowan, "the starkest man" in Teviotdale; and while the rescue was still incomplete, thus spake Willie:—

"O mony a time, quo' Kinmont Willie,
I have ridden horse baith wild and wood,
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan,
I ween my legs have ne'er bestrode.

And mony a time, quo' Kinmont Willie,
I've pricked a horse out ower the furs;
But since the day I backed a steed,
I never wore sic cumbrous spurs."

The closing stanzas afford as fine a subject for a picture as any I know:—

"We scarce had won the Staneshaw Bank,
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,

And a thousand men on horse and foot,
Cam wi' the keen Lord Scroope along.

Buccleuch has turned to Eden water,
Even when it flowed frae bank to brim,
And he has plunged in wi' a' his band,
And safely swam them through the stream.

He turn'd him on the other side,
And at Lord Scroope his glove flung he—
'If ye like na my visit in merrie England,
In fair Scotland come visit me!'

All sore astonished stood Lord Scroope,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trew his eyes,
When threw the water they had gane,

'He is either himself a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I wadna hae ridden that wan water
For a' the gowd in Christentie.'"

When delivered up by the weakest of Scotch Kings to the Queen of England, for fear he himself should fall under the disfavour of the legal murderer of his mother, and his own prospects should thus suffer, Buccleuch made a speech worthy of his line and his country. "How did you dare," said the imperious Queen, "to do such a thing." "Dare, madam," said Buccleuch, "what would a man not dare to do?" It is creditable to the English Queen, that she recognised the character of the man, and set him at liberty. This, grand as it is, may be paralleled by the speech of another Borderer, who was told off for a daring and lawless

deed. "But what dae ye think o't?" was the query of the prompter. "Think o't," said the Borderer; "it's no the thinking that's onything; it is the daeing o't and the deein' for't!"

We have seen the part which Robert Lord Maxwell took in the death of Armstrong of Gilnockie. Always a powerful family, the Maxwells were never greater than under his chieftainship and that of his son, Lord John Maxwell. Under the latter even the Johnstones—about the roughest riders on the Borders—the hereditary foes of the Maxwells, came under a bond of man-rent. But a raid of the Johnstones on the Crichtons of Nithsdale—the burden of the *Lads of Wamphray*, with its terrible doings and its lightsome turns, worthy of *The Gay Galliard* for whose death it records the revenge—broke up the alliance between the Johnstones and the Maxwells. The result was the conflict of Dryffe Sands (1593), in which Lord Maxwell fell—the hand of the wounded man being hewn off and borne as a trophy by Willie Johnstone of Kirkhill. Out of this somewhat foul slaughter, and other gruesome deeds, there grew up in the breast of the son of him who thus fell —also Lord John—a purpose of revenge as deep as it was persistent, which ruled his whole life and actions. At length, at a meeting arranged, as if for an amicable purpose, between Maxwell and Johnstone, at Auchnamhill near Arthorstane, in Dumfriesshire, the former, in a cowardly manner, fatally shot Johnstone through the back with, it is

said, a poisoned bullet. This was on the 6th April, 1608. The assassin fled to France, and the ballad, *Lord Maxwell's Goodnight*, was written on occasion of his departure, or between that period and 1613. The sympathy of his clan was with him in his exile, as was obviously also that of the writer of the ballad. It illustrates the peculiar view of blood atonement already shown to have been for so many ages characteristic of the Borderer, as the following stanzas show:—

"Adieu, madame, my mother dear,
But and my sisters three!
Adieu, fair Robert of Orchardstane!
My heart is wae for thee.

Adieu, the lily and the rose,
The primrose fair to see;
Adieu, my lady, and only joy!
For I may not stay with thee.

Though I hae slain the Lord Johnstone,
What care I for their feid?
My noble mind their wrath disdains—
He was my father's deid.

Both night and day I labour'd oft
Of him revenged to be;
But now I've got what lang I sought,
And I may not stay with thee.

Adieu! Drumlanrig, false wert aye,
And Closeburn in a band!
The Laird of Lag, frae my father that fled,
When the Johnstone struck off his hand.

* * * * * *

Adieu ! Dumfries, my proper place,
  But and Caerlaverock fair !
Adieu ! my castle of the Thrieve,
  Wi' a' my buildings there :

Adieu ! Lochmaben's gate sae fair,
  The Langholm-holm, where birks there be ;
Adieu ! my ladye, and only joy,
  For, trust me, I may not stay wi' thee."

The exile returned to Scotland some years after this, but only to be taken and executed for his crime in 1613. But not quite for his crime, for the contemptible King had a favourite, Sir Gideon Murray, for whom he wished to provide. He had no estate ready; therefore fire-raising was put in the dittay against Maxwell. This implied forfeiture of estate. Maxwell was thus conveniently disposed of, and part of his estate given to Murray, which, however, it is pleasant to record, he did not long hold. But for the Union of the Crowns, and the greater strength of the monarch which accrued from it, the Head of the House of Maxwell would certainly have escaped the death penalty, as many an equally bloodstained Maxwell and Johnstone had done before him. We may look on the end of Lord Maxwell on the Castle-hill of Edinburgh as the close of the old period of individualism and lawlessness, and the beginning of modern respectability and order, very good in the main, but yet opening a century and a half which afforded an excellent cloak for the advancement in Scotland of a great many grasping knaves who, while desti-

tute of scrupulousness, knew how to keep within the limits of law.

The Ballads to which we have just referred have been found to relate to events of general historical interest, or to the details of Border raids and exploits. The interest of them lies mainly in action. But there is another class of Ballads which, while they refer to incident more or less, yet derive their main interest and impressiveness from the tragic or pathetic emotion excited by the story. And, curiously enough, the Ballads of this description which thrill us the most, and which have most widely and deeply stirred the soul of men in subsequent times, have their locality in one valley—that of the Yarrow—the stream of pathetic song. Rough and rude was the life there for many generations; but the blood-stains on its grassy holms have watered and nourished growths of sentiment so tender, so pure, so intense, as to be for ever a gain and a blessing to the human heart.

How the Yarrow has been the scene and the source of so much that is grand and touching in the older poetry of the Borders, is a question of great interest. That it has been so, not only through the accident of tragic and pathetic incident, but also through the peculiarities of its natural scenery, fusing with the moods of mind that sympathize with this kind of incident, I hope to be able to show. Meanwhile let us glance at its Ballads and Songs.

Of the Ballads and Songs of the Yarrow of a pathetic

type, there are four principal ones. They all apparently refer to real incidents. The oldest, which was first printed in *Ramsay's Tea Table Miscellany* in 1724, is *Willie's Rare and Willie's Fair.* Pinkerton refers it to the period between James the Fourth and the reign of Mary. Then there are *The Douglas Tragedy, The Dowie Dens of Yarrow,* and *The Lament of the Border Widow.* The note struck in the first of these is that regret for the promise of happiness and that monotone of sadness which runs through all the pathetic poetry of the Yarrow. The burden of the song is the old story of a lost lover—lost, not through the violence of men as in *The Douglas Tragedy,* but by drowning in the Yarrow. The depth of passion conveyed is as wonderful as the simplicity of the expression:—

"Willie's rare, and Willie's fair,
And Willie's wondrous bonny,
And Willie hecht* to marry me,
Gin e'er he married ony.

Yestreen I made my bed fu' braid,
This night I'll make it narrow;
For a' the live-lang winter night
I'll lye twined o' my marrow.

O came ye by yon water-side?
Pu'd you the rose or lily?
Or came ye by yon meadow green?
Or saw ye my sweet Willie?

* Promised, or engaged.

She sought him east, she sought him west,
  She sought him braid and narrow;
Syne in the cleaving of a craig,
  She found him drowned in Yarrow."*

The remaining three were first given by Scott in the *Minstrelsy* (1802-1803). *The Douglas Tragedy* and *The Dowie Dens* both refer to the same kind of incident—the loss of lover or husband in mortal combat. The scene of the former is the glen of the Douglas Burn, which rises in the dark heathery heights of Blackhouse, and joins the Yarrow at the Douglas Craig. The lovers were fleeing by night from the Tower of Blackhouse, situated in this glen, whose ruins still remain, though in a painfully uncared for and gradually vanishing condition. Blackhouse was a very old possession of the great house of Douglas. One of the family sat in a Parliament of Malcolm Canmore at Forfar, as baronial lord of Douglas Burn. Whether or not the lady who fled from her father's tower was a Douglas, it is now impossible to say. But, if she were, this would account for the disparity in social rank between herself and her lover, at which tradition hints. The bridle-road across the hills, which the fleeing lovers are said to have followed, can still be easily traced. It is one of the main old Border roads or riding tracks between the Yarrow and

* Mr. Palgrave prints a version with several additional stanzas. One of these, the finest, belongs to *The Dowie Dens*. The others, from their somewhat full references to the scenery, betray their comparatively modern origin.

the Tweed. From Blackhouse Tower, it leads along the broad hill-tops by way of Hundleshope, or by Crookstone, to the Tweed at Peebles, proceeding across the watershed of the Douglas, Glenrath, and Glensax Burns, and by the ridge of the Fa' Seat—the highest of the hills in that wild district. From this central path various branches of roads diverge, each traceable still to the site of some ancient peel, with which it afforded a ready connection to the mounted Borderer. The knight and his lady love were making their way for the home of the former, when overtaken by her father and her seven brothers. The stones which are said to mark the scene of the fatal conflict are, however, obviously greatly older than any reasonable date which can be assigned to the story of the ballad, and, instead of their being only seven, as is commonly alleged, there are eleven in all now visible. Three of these are still standing; and eight are lying flat on the ground. In form they present the appearance of a semi-circle, the section forming the base lying to the north or up the hill. The breadth of the section at the base is fifteen paces, or about forty-five feet. The distance of each stone in the circle from its neighbour seems to have been about nine paces, or twenty-seven feet. The structure obviously belongs to the general class of stone circles common on the Lowland hills, which might have been places of judicature, or worship, or burial, or all three. Still it is quite possible that in this, as in other instances,

these ancient stones became the scene of a historical event.

In the *Douglas Tragedy* we have a perfect concentration of picturesque and striking incidents. The flight of the lovers by night up the heights of Black Cleugh, the combat in which the maiden's father and seven brothers are slain, the maiden stooping to staunch her father's wounds, the struggle between regard for her family and affection for her lover, the continued flight from those dead faces pallid on the knowe, and sadly shadowed in the soft moonlight, are crowded into a brief intensity of impression. And then there is the still more tragic close of the whole :—

"He's lifted her on a milk white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And slowly they baith rade away.

O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the licht of the moon,
Until they cam to yon wan water,
And there they lichted down.

They lichted down to tak a drink
Of the spring that ran sae clear;
And down the stream ran his gude heart's blude,
And sair she 'gan to fear.

'Hold up, hold up, Lord William,' she says,
'For I fear that you are slain!'
''Tis naething but the shadow of my scarlet cloak
That shines in the water sae plain.'

Oh, they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the licht of the moon,
Until they cam to his mother's ha' door,
And there they lichted down.

Lord William was dead lang ere midnicht;
Lady Margaret lang ere day;
And all true lovers that gang thegether,
May they have mair luck than they."

The *Dowie Dens* is supposed to refer to a duel fought at Deuchar Swire, near Yarrow Kirk, between John Scott of Tuschielaw and his brother-in-law, Walter Scott, third son of Robert Scott of Thirlestane, in which the latter was slain.* It seems, however, rather to be founded on the fact of Walter Scott being surprised and surrounded by a band hired by his brother-in-law to assassinate him. For brevity, directness, and graphic turn of narrative, vivid picturing, and the image of passionate devotion to the dead, there are few ballads in any language that match its strains:—

"Late at e'en drinking the wine,
And ere they paid the lawing,†
They set a combat them between,
To fecht it in the dawing.‡

Oh, stay at hame, my noble lord,
Oh, stay at hame, my marrow;*
My cruel brother will you betray
On the dowie houms of Yarrow.

* *Minstrelsy*, II., p. 370. † Reckoning, bill. ‡ Dawning.

Oh, fare ye weel, my ladie gay,
  Oh, fare ye weel, my Sarah!
For I maun gae, though I ne'er return
  From the dowie banks o' Yarrow.

She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his hair,
  As oft she had done before, O;
She belted him with his noble brand,
  And he's away to Yarrow.

As he gaed up the Tinnies Bank,
  I wot he gaed wi' sorrow,
Till, down in a den† he spied nine armed men,
  On the dowie houms of Yarrow.

'Oh, come ye here to part your land,
  The bonnie Forest thorough?
Or come ye here to wield your brand
  On the dowie houms of Yarrow?'

'I come not here to part my land,
  And neither to beg nor borrow;
I come to wield my noble brand
  On the bonnie banks of Yarrow.

'If I see all, ye're nine to ane,
  And that's an unequal marrow;
Yet will I fight while lasts my brand,
  On the bonnie banks of Yarrow.'

Four has he hurt, and five has slain,
  On the bludie braes of Yarrow;
Till that stubborn knight came him behind
  And ran his body thorough.

'Gae hame, gae hame, gude-brother‡ John,
  And tell your sister Sarah,

* Match, mate. † Hollow. ‡ Brother-in-law.

To come and lift her leafu' lord;
He's sleepin sound on Yarrow.'

'Yestreen I dreamed a dolefu' dream;
I fear there will be sorrow!
I dreamed I pu'd the heather green,
Wi' my true love on Yarrow.

O gentle wind that bloweth south,
From where my Love repaireth,
Convey a kiss frae his dear mouth,
And tell me how he faireth!

Oh! tell sweet Willie to come down,
And hear the mavis singing,
And see the birds on ilka bush,
And leaves around them hinging.

But in the glen strove armed men;
They've wrought me dule and sorrow;
They've slain—the comeliest knight they've slain—
He bleeding lies on Yarrow.'

As she sped down yon high, high hill,
She gaed wi' dule and sorrow,
And in the den spied ten slain men,
On the dowie banks of Yarrow.

She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his hair,
She searched his wounds all thorough;
She kissed them, till her lips grew red,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow.

'Now haud your tongue, my daughter dear!
For a' this breeds but sorrow;
I'll wed ye to a better lord,
Than him ye lost on Yarrow.'—

'Oh, haud your tongue, my father dear!
Ye mind me but of sorrow;
A fairer rose did never bloom
Than now lies cropp'd on Yarrow.'"

The Lament of the Border Widow, and the circumstances in which it originated, have already been noticed in connection with the social life of the district.* There is no more touching wail of grief in all our Scottish poetry. The romantic ballad of the Yarrow, *The Gay Goss Hawk*,† and the very remarkable historical one, *The Outlaw Murray*,‡ have also been noticed in their places.

The power of these old strains lies mainly in this—that they indicate in the simplest, readiest words the realism, the power, the pathos of our primary human emotions—deepest love, saddest sorrow, unflinching courage, and noble self-sacrifice. This was what touched the heart of Scott, purified and inspired him, and made him ashamed of eighteenth century conventionalism.

"And pity sanctifies the verse
That paints by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love,
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow."

* See *supra*, p. 285. † See *supra*, p. 333. ‡ See *supra*, p. 278.

XII.

THE POETRY OF THE BORDERS—INFLUENCE OF THE SCENERY—THE LOVE SONGS AND GENERAL POETRY.

"THE Scottish Ballad-Minstrelsy," says Mr. Hill Burton, "ranges over and engrosses every element of poetry except the religious or devout. . . . The minstrelsy is rich in all that picturesquely associates itself with the shades as well as with the lights of the national life. We have the great crimes, with their harvest of remorse and retribution. War is there, with its patriotic devotion, its heroism, and triumphs on the one side; its calamities and desolation on the other. Love, of course, with all its romantic variations, is abundant. Superstition enters with its horrors, but it is also sometimes borne on the wings of an exquisite fancy, yet so wild and wayward that one cannot see what aesthetic law or theory can justify it, and yet it pleases."

This statement is fair enough, but it is not sufficiently qualified. "Every element of poetry" is certainly too wide an expression to be quite applicable. We have but few

traces in the older Border poetry, or Ballad Minstrelsy in general, of a direct feeling for nature in its softer or more beautiful side, and an exceedingly modified recognition, if any at all, of its grander or sterner side. There was no tarrying sympathy with, or full description of, the scenery of the district, whether dark-browed hill and unfathomed glen, or the soft pastoral knowes and green haughs of the waters. The face of nature, be it mild or stern, as in itself an object of poetic interest, did not strike the older Minstrels of the south of Scotland. And of nature as the symbolism of human life and feeling we have no trace whatever.

Neither side of nature was, however, unfelt. The influence of the softer side, at least, was strong but indirect. It was somehow in the heart of the poet; but it lacked full and definite expression. This is shown in frequently recurring stanza or epithet, that indicates a loving feeling for a place or a natural object. The tower stands "quite pleasauntlie;" the Outlaw's castle is "feir to see;" and, what it was impossible not to feel in the sternest time, the birk was "bonnie," and the notes of birds pleasing.

There is one feature in particular of the Border Landscape, which, from the frequent notice of it in the Ballads, appears to have been strongly impressed on the feeling of the time. This is conveyed in the expression which is commonly applied to a stream—*the wan water*. That *wan* as so employed is an adjective of colour there can be no doubt,

though originally the verb *wan* or *wane*, as applied to water, meant to *ebb* or *decrease*, as in the expression *Tha wætera wanodon* (the waters were waning). *Wan* in composition means defect, and as an adjective in Anglo-Saxon it means defect of strength, *feeble*, or deficiency in brightness, *pale*, *livid*, *dusky*. *Wan*, thus indicating colour, was an epithet applied to water in Anglo-Saxon poetry, and from it came down into the Mediæval Romances and the Scottish Ballads. Thus Syr Bedevere saw

"Nothynge
But watres depe and wavés wanne."*

In the English version of the later *Morte D'Arthure* we have the following:—"What saw thou there? said the King. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wap and the waves wan." Here *wap* is obviously a verb meaning to strike against the shore, and *wan* is probably also the verb meaning to ebb or wane. There is thus evidence of a two-fold application of the word. But in the Scottish Ballads *wan* is constantly applied to a stream or running water in such a way as to exclude the idea of ebbing, and to imply the adjectival sense of pale or dusky colour. The pure running stream is, in the poetry of most nations, an emblem of life, of brightness, and cheerfulness. And I rather think that the phrase—*the wan water*—is peculiar to Saxon and to Scottish poetry. The question

* *Le Morte Arthur.*

arises:—What is the origin of the application of the epithet to the Border streams, and whence the frequency of its use? Is it true to natural appearance? We know well that those streams are as bright, pure, and sparkling as are to be found anywhere. They are, in fact, remarkable among streams for these qualities. There is hardly a glen in the Lowlands which is without its burn or streamlet, and, be the sides of the glen rich in pastoral green, or flushing full in the purple beauty of the heather-bloom, the burn, by its bright links, now hurrying in stream, now resting in pool, gives light by its gleam and life by its music and motion to the pastoral solitude. Our later poets have universally felt and given expression to this pleasing aspect of our streams. But the feeling of the older minstrels, as conveyed in *the wan water*, is not less true to nature and natural appearance than is the brighter aspect of the same object. Let any one walk across a Border moorland on one of those days not uncommon in the district, when, overhead and all around, the sky is shrouded by grey clouds, peaceable and motionless, piled in masses high and imposing. As this is generally in late autumn, let him notice also that the bent is brown, and the heather-bloom beginning to fade, and that the grey tint on the sky is helped by the same colour on rock and stone, and then let him watch the effect of this on pool and stream, and he will feel and understand the force, truthfulness, and beauty of the expression—*the wan water*.

The stream, which was formerly bright and sparkling, has taken on the tint of the landscape around it, and we feel that it now touches the eye and heart with its wan look. The older minstrels noted aspects of the scenery of this description; and they did more, they instinctively fused these with the story in hand, or with some turn in it. This particular look, for example, of the stream is introduced with wonderful effect into several of the historical ballads. It occurs in *The Douglas Tragedy*, already quoted. And mark its peculiar appropriateness. The hero of the ballad has carried off his love after a deadly conflict, in which the father and brothers of the maiden fell. The hero and his love ride slowly across the hills between the Yarrow and the Tweed, amid a quiet sheen of moonlight all over the vague weird-like moorland; the father and brothers are lying dead in the deep glen of the mountain burn which the lovers have left behind them. The companion of the maiden begins to feel that he too has carried with him a wound—in fact, his death-wound—from the conflict. The dying man finds it necessary to rest, and the minstrel with a wonderful touch tells us:—

"O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the licht of the moon,
Until they cam to yon wan water,
And there they lichted doun."

Where more appropriately could a dying man, with fad-

ing hope and sense, have rested than by the "wan water?"

In the ballad of *Lord William* we have the not uncommon story of disappointed love and revenge, in this instance on the part of the lady. The body of the lover whom she had secretly and subtilely slain was concealed for, as the ballad says, "three quarters of a year." It proceeds:—

"Then she cried on her waiting maid,
Aye ready at her ca',
There is a knight into my bower,
'Tis time he were awa'.

The ane has ta'en him by the head,
The ither by the feet,
And thrown him in the wan water,
That ran baith wide and deep."*

Every one must feel that there is a singular appropriateness between the dread act here narrated, and the scene suggested to the sense by the

"Wan water
That ran baith wide and deep."

The fixing on this feature of the surrounding circumstances, a feature that harmonises with the action, is poetic art in one of its simplest yet most powerful forms.

There is one other reference of this sort, which is too

* *Minstrelsy*, II., 243.

striking to be passed over. A mournful summons has come to one who has been compelled to abandon for another the sweetheart he yet loves. And we are told :—

"Sad Willie raise, drew to his claes,
Put on him hose and shoon,
And he's away to Annie's bower,
By the lee licht of the moon."

The writer of these lines certainly felt the power of the fusion of the lee or lonesome light of the moon with the feeling in the heart of the lover.

There is another phrase which is very common, and which strikes one as indicating truly an almost constant aspect of the landscape. This is "the bent sae brown." From the ballad of Thomas the Rhymour onwards, all through the poetry of the Borders, this phrase occurs :—

"But he wasna on his berry brown steed,
Nor twa miles from the town,
Till up it starts these three fierce men,
Among the bent sae brown."

It is that aspect of the uplands with which men living there, and spending most of their life in the open air on the high stretches of the southern moorlands, were daily familar. For, with the short exception of some weeks in July and August, the bent or hair-grass of those Border hills is "brown," at first a deep, rich, golden brown, which, in the sunlight of a late autumn day, makes broad spaces

of unspeakable splendour amid the dark and fading heather. And then, growing to a paler hue, it yet keeps its place, amid the wild winds of winter, tossed, torn, and dishevelled, until the late spring or summer renews the cycle by the fresh shoots of another brief period of green life.

But these are wholly incidental touches; they are given simply in passing; the minstrel never tarries on the features of the landscape as worthy of direct attention, or as objects that call for description by themselves. This absence of direct poetic dealing with mere nature is not certainly peculiar to the Border minstrels. The sympathy for it was through many centuries but occasional, and very imperfectly developed in Scottish poetry.

If the softer side of nature was but incidentally noticed, the sterner side fared still worse. All along, from the time of James I. of Scotland downwards, there was not in the poetic South, or indeed anywhere else in Scotland, an imaginative sympathy for the wild and grand in nature, as it is presented, for example, at the head of Talla, or Loch Skene, at the head of Manor, or the Douglas Burn. This side of things seemed rather to repel than to attract even imaginative men during these years down to near our own time. There are several considerations which might be adduced to account for this; but at present it is sufficient to say that men had not got over the original feeling of fear or dread which is inspired by the wild and savage scenes of the world; and, until the impressive in

nature ceases to be merely dreadful to us, we cannot feel it to be either grand or sublime. Fear, instead of being the soul, is the very death of imaginative passion. It requires to be faced, or utterly overcome, before we can realise the placid feeling of the beautiful or sublime. Hence men in Scotland for several hundreds of years turned away from the poetical aspect of the grander side of things. As a specimen of this kind of antagonism to wild nature, I may refer to Dr. Alexander Pennycuik, author of *The Description of Tweeddale*, published in 1715: —"This country is almost everywhere swelled with hills, which are, for the most part, green, grassy, and pleasant, except a ridge of bordering mountains, betwixt Minchmuir and Henderland, being black, craigie, and of a melancholy aspect, with deep and horrid precipices, a wearisome and comfortless piece of way for travellers." * Why, this very ridge of mountains contains some of the most impressive scenery of the district, and is just the walk which a man would choose who has a soul in him that can be quickened by natural beauty and grandeur, or awed by solitude.

Compare with this statement of Dr. Pennycuik, the following, written only a few years after his was published, by a Borderer also:—"I am just returned from a Highland expedition, and was much delighted with the magnificence of nature in her awful simplicity. . . . Plain corn countries look as if men had made them; but I defy all mankind put

* *Description*, p. 45, ed. 1815.

together to make anything like the Pass of Killiekrankie." * There was soul in this writer, but she was Mrs. Cockburn, authoress of one of the versions of *The Flowers of the Forest.*

Yet, if we look at the whole course of Border poetry, we shall find that the scenery of the district in which it grew up has had a marked influence over it. There can be no doubt that the wilder and grander scenes of the Border country helped very much to nourish that stern, war-loving spirit which issued in the exploits celebrated in the Ballads—a spirit shared in by people and by bard alike. And the scenes of nearly all the most powerful and striking of the Historical Ballads are laid in the wilds around the heads of the Teviot and the Reed, and in the dark recesses of the mosses of the Tarras and the Liddel. This might arise a good deal from situation, as being near the turbulent tribes of the Reed and the Tyne, on the south side of the Cheviots, and the places, therefore, peculiarly of strong and stirring incident. But it is also remarkable that the scenes of the most tragic and pathetic ballads and songs are to be found on the soft green braes of Yarrow, while the strains of the most tender of the love songs first burst on the ear in the grassy and wooded haughs of the Tweed. When we come to speak of the poetry, in fact, the songs of the Tweed, which sprung up only about the middle of the seventeenth century, we shall find them marked almost exclusively by

* *Songstresses of Scotland*, I., p. 106.

tender sentiment, dashed with a soft pathos. But, on the whole, the feeling is one of joy, chastened and subdued. Somehow, in the poetry of the Yarrow, be it Ballad or Song, there is a deeper tinge of sorrow, often a very dark colouring, an almost overpowering sadness. The emotion is that so finely expressed at a later period in *The Flowers of the Forest.* The feeling is as of a brief, bright morning, full of promise, making the hills splendid and the heart glad; but ere noon we have cloud and rain and tears, and the evening closes around us with only the memory of the vanished joy.

No doubt a series of tragic incidents may give a prevailing tone to the feeling and the poetry of a district, apart in a great measure from the character of the scenery. But I cannot help thinking that in this case the nature of the scenery has had a great deal to do in predisposing the imagination to a melancholy cast, and thus fitting the mind for receiving and retaining, if not originating, the tragic or pathetic creation. This influence, too, might be wholly an unconscious one for many generations. It would thus affect the singer without his knowing it distinctly, and it would not be marked in his verse, or, if indicated at all, only incidentally. And this is exactly what we find in those older Ballads of the Yarrow. We have no direct description of the features of the vale, but we have now and again a wondrously impressive and characteristic epithet, which lets us into the secret of the Minstrel's heart, and by none is his inner soul more fully revealed than by the inexpressibly

pathetic yet tenderly beautiful phrase, "the dowie houms of Yarrow."

Nor will any one who is familiar with the Vale of Yarrow find much difficulty in understanding how it is suited to pathetic verse. The rough and broken, yet clear, beautiful and wide-spreading stream, has no grand cliffs to show; and it is not surrounded by high and overshadowing hills. Here and there it flows placidly, reflectively, in large liquid lapses through an open valley of the deepest summer green, still, let us be thankful, in its upper reaches at least, mantled by nature, and untouched by plough or harrow. There is a placid monotone about its bare treeless scenery; an unbroken pastoral stillness on the sloping braes and hill-sides, as they rise, fall, and blend in a uniformly deep green colouring. The silence of the place is forced upon the attention, deepened even, by the occasional break in the flow of the stream, or by the bleating of the sheep that, white and motionless amid their pasture, dot the knowes. We are attracted by the silence, and we are also repressed. There is the pleasure of hushed enjoyment. The spirit of the scene is in these immortal lines:—

> "Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
> A softness still and holy;
> The grace of forest charms decayed,
> And pastoral melancholy."

These deep green grassy knowes of the valley are peculiarly

susceptible of atmospheric change—of light and shade. In a morning, with a blue sky, or with breaks of sunlight through the white fleeting clouds, the green hill-sides and the stream smile and gleam in sympathy with the cheerfulness of heaven. It is then we hear of "the silver stream" and "the bonnie houms of Yarrow," and we exult in the fresh feeling which inspired the old lines:—

"Pan, playing on his aiten reed,
And shepherds him attending,
Do here resort, their flocks to feed,
The hills and haughs commending;
With cur and kent* upon the bent,
Sing to the sun, *good-morrow*,
And swear nae fields mair pleasure yields,
Than Leader Haughs and Yarrow."

But under a grey sky, or at the gloamin', the Yarrow wears a peculiarly wan aspect—a look of sadness. And no valley, I know, is more susceptible of sudden change. The Spirit of the air can speedily weave out of the mists that gather high up on the massive hills at the heads of the Meggat and the Talla, a wide-spreading web of greyish cloud—the "skaum" of the sky—that casts a gloom over the tender green of the hills, and dims the face of loch and stream in a pensive shadow. The saddened heart would readily find there fit analogue and nourishment for its sorrow.

* Long staff with curved head used by shepherds.

This character of changeableness has made the scenery peculiarly suitable for the nurture and expression of varying emotion—the notes of joy and grief. It lay at the heart of the earlier poetry of the Yarrow, inspiring it, without itself receiving definite utterance. In the refrain of *The Dowie Dens*, as it alternates between "bonnie banks" and "dowie houms," we see the mutual influence of scenery and feeling. Only in the more modern songs, however, has the connection between the mood of mind and the aspect of nature been expressly proclaimed. A lover is in doubt as to the answer to his suit, and then he feels that nature is hushed in sympathy with the eager expectant state of his feelings:—

"The hills and dales no more resound
The lambkins' tender cry,
Without one murmur Yarrow stole
In dimpling silence bye."

But the answer is favourable; there is an outbreak of joyous feeling, and then the other aspect of the scenery strikes the mind:—

"The hills and dales again resound
The lambkins' tender cry,
With all his murmurs Yarrow trill'd
The song of triumph bye."*

* Hamilton of Bangour—*Poems*, p. 75, ed. 1760.

But, doubtless, there has been an action and inter-action between the scenery of the Yarrow and the poetic thought which has brooded over it. The result to us is something altogether different from the bare actualities of the scene; and, with all this older growth of poetry and tradition, it is not to be wondered at that the Yarrow we now feel is not altogether the Yarrow we see. Story, legend, tradition, ballad and song are now inseparably fused with the stream, the hills, and the glens. We know the Yarrow as identified with quiet pastoral life, and its peculiar seclusion, but we feel it also to be associated with stories of love and hope, of sorrow and despair, deeds of blood, and old quaint romantic memories. The impress of these is on all the natural scenery; and when we look at it or think of it, it is not the bare stream or glen which lies before us, but the Yarrow of the faded forest, of the Dowie Dens, of the Blackhouse Tragedy, of the wan maiden awaking to life in St. Mary's Kirk at the touch of her lover's hand, of the sweet flower of Dryhope wedded to the rough reiver, of the youth dead in his prime of love and promise in the cleaving of the crag. If the Yarrow gave help to its poetry by its peculiar scenery, that has been amply repaid. The actual scene has been enriched, glorified, and transfigured by the return into its bosom of the wealth of imaginative creation, realised as the very life of the vale. Old world thoughts—"the treasured dreams of times long past"—flow into the senses, mingle with what we see

and feel, and make for us another than the actual Yarrow :—

> " I see, but not by sight alone,
> Loved Yarrow, have I won thee ;
> A ray of Fancy still survives—
> Her sunshine plays upon thee ! "

Or, as Hogg puts it more sternly :—

> " While o'er thy green and lowly graves,
> The moorcocks bay and plovers wail :
> The mountain spirits on the gale
> Oft o'er thee sound the requiem dread ;
> And warrior shades and spectres pale,
> Still linger by the quiet dead."

The Love Songs of the Tweed contain the most explicit references to the scenery, and show an increasing appreciation of that softer side of nature which appears in the valley of the river. For, while the wildest, grandest, and most secluded of the scenery is to be found among the great hills, and in the glens of the waters and the burns, the softest, the most cultured and beautiful, lies in the valley of the Tweed. You may see there, in the summer time, the gleaming flow, and hear the music, by day and night, of a river clear as the light of heaven. Its motion is poetry itself, as it now stays calm in pool, and then rushes bright and joyous in stream. There are green haughs, soft mea-

dows, and corn-fields, and gently sloping hill-sides, in many parts well and picturesquely wooded — all looking as if the human life there were pleasant and comfortable. It is in this region that we find the source of the Border Love Songs in the seventeenth century; and they grow increasingly in sympathy with the green haughs, the sunny gleam, and the gentle murmur of the river, the notes of early birds, the bleating of lambs, and the melancholy music of the sequestered cushat of the woods in the vale of the Tweed. In the earlier songs this influence is to a great extent an unconscious one. The singer felt, but did not dwell on the aspects of the scenery, which yet coincided with the passion he sought to express. The sympathy he had for the nature around him was subordinate to and illustrative of that primal emotion—human love. We yet see that the sense of the gentle beauty in things lay deep down in his heart, and, like the burn that flows hidden under the grassy fringe, and nourishes the verdure of the glen, helped to sustain the lightsome life of many a song. And we have only to come down to the more modern period of Robert Crawford, to find how profuse was the feeling for nature that was mingled with the expression of passion, and to the later times of Leyden, Hogg, Scott, and others, to observe the depth and directness of sympathy for the hills, glens, and streams of the Border Land. This was the new element in the

Poetry of the Borders; and it was from its rise and spread in the district that the fresh breath of nature passed into the Scottish, and, we may add, the English, poetry of this century.

The songs of Tweedside have a character wholly their own. They breathe a sweet pastoral melody. There is a passionate fondness dashed with sadness and regret—a mingling of love and sorrow, of hopefulness and despair. This curious blending of opposite feelings flows all through these songs, and seems to reflect the familiar contrast in the scenery—the sparkling gleam of the morning and noon gradually passing into the pathetic shade of the gloamin' on the river itself. This key-note of Tweedside song was first struck in the middle of the seventeenth century by a lord of Neidpath, in a fine lyric. It is entitled *Tweedside.* Its author was John Hay, tenth Lord Yester, third Earl and second Marquis of Tweeddale—a direct descendant of Hay of Lochquharret and Mary the elder daughter of the famous Sir Simon Fraser of Oliver, the hero of Roslin. Lord Tweeddale, born 1645, took a very prominent part in the public events of the times of the Restoration, the Revolution, and the Union. He died in 1713. The Tweeddale family had still at that period (at least as late as 1686) their ancient Peeblesshire estate, inherited from the lord of Oliver and Neidpath. The tenth lord of Yester lived in his youth at Neidpath Castle, and, obviously, had a

warm love for the banks of the Tweed, which helped to inspire his song:—

"When Maggie and me were acquaint,
I carried my noddle fu' hie,
Nae lintwhite in a' the gay plain,
Nae gowdspink* sae bonnie as she.

I whistled, I piped, and I sang;
I woo'd, but I cam nae great speed;
Therefore I maun wander abroad,
And lay my banes far frae the Tweed.

To Maggie my love I did tell;
My tears did my passion express:
Alas! for I lo'ed her ower weel,
And the women lo'e sic a man less.

Her heart it was frozen and cauld;
Her pride had my ruin decreed;
Therefore I maun wander abroad,
And lay my banes far frae the Tweed."

In this there is true, simple feeling, simply expressed, warmed and coloured by a sense of nature around the poet —the purity of the lintwhite, the unobtrusive beauty of the goldfinch, the quiet flow of the river, happiness within reach, yet, when sought for, eluding the grasp and lost forever. It is interesting to note that the natural objects which attracted poetic sympathy in this the earliest remaining Tweeddale song are the birds of the district and the

* Goldfinch.

quiet of the river, unexpressed in the song, yet obviously consciously felt all through it. There is no reference to the wild flowers of the plains or hills, unless indeed generally in the somewhat conventional phrase "the gay plain." It is curious to find in the song of *Leader Haughs and Yarrow* of the wandering minstrel, Nicol Burne, who was contemporaneous with Lord Yester, that the main thing he notices in the description of the Yarrow is precisely the notes of the birds:—

"A mile below who lists to ride
Will hear the mavis singing,
Into Saint Leonard's banks she bides,
Sweet birks her head owerhinging.
The lint-white loud, and progne proud,
With tuneful throats and narrow,
Into Saint Leonard's banks they sing,
As sweetly as in Yarrow.

* * * * * *

By break of day the lark can say,
I'll bid you a good-morrow;
I'll stretch my wing, and mounting sing,
O'er Leader Haughs and Yarrow."

This appreciation of the notes of birds, rather than of the colours and forms of the flowers of the field, was, I think, quite natural in the circumstances of the time. Men had been educated to a sense of sweet sounds; they had no training in painting, or any art that fitted them for the appreciation of colour or form.

There is another Tweedside song, entitled *John Hay's Bonnie Lassie*, which is supposed to have been written about 1670; and, curiously enough, in honour of Lady Margaret Hay, the eldest daughter of the first Marquis of Tweeddale. The tradition is that it was the composition of a working joiner, who had ventured to cherish secretly in his heart a fruitless passion for the highborn Lady Margaret. She afterwards became the wife of the third Earl of Roxburghe, and died near Kelso in 1753, at the age of 96. There are two verses in it worth quoting :—

"She's fresh as the spring, and sweet as Aurora,
When birds mount and sing, bidding day a good-morrow;
The sward of the mead, enamell'd with daisies,
Looks wither'd and dead, when twined of her graces.

But if she appear where verdures invite her,
The fountains run clear, and the flowers smell the sweeter.
'Tis heaven to be by, when her wit is a-flowing;
Her smiles and bright eyes set my spirits a-glowing."

Here at length the daisy and the green sward, and the wild flowers of the haugh, have become objects of the poet's cherished love, whose attractiveness is enhanced by the presence of the object of his passion. The Tweedside joiner lad, humbly born as he might have been, was yet a noble man by nature; and he, in the seventeenth century, on the banks of the Tweed, struck the key-note of that strain which the Ayrshire ploughman caught up and beautified in the eighteenth century and left as an imperishable melody for

all time; for he, too, mingled in his song love and flowers and birds :—

"I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair :
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air :
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean."

The song of *Ettrick Banks* is an old one. It first appeared in print in Thomson's *Orpheus Caledonius* in 1725; but it may be regarded as considerably older than this both in air and words. Pinkerton is inclined to refer it to the period between the time of Mary and the Restoration. This song has some exquisite references to local scenery and traits of the older shepherd life. These could have been noted only by a native of the district, or one resident there, and thoroughly familiar with the people and the scenes :—

"On Ettrick banks, ae simmer night,
At gloamin', when the sheep drave hame,
I met my lassie, braw and tight,
Come wading barefoot a' her lane.

* * * * * *

A' day, when we hae wrocht eneuch,
When winter frosts and snaw begin,
Soon as the sun gaes west the loch,
At night when ye sit down to spin,

I'll screw my pipes and play a spring;
And thus the weary night will end,
Till the tender kid and lamb-time bring
Our pleasant simmer back again.

Syne, when the trees are in their bloom
And gowans glent o'er ilka fiel',
I'll meet my lass among the broom,
And lead you to my simmer shiel.
There, far frae a' their scornfu' din,
That mak' the kindly heart their sport,
We'll laugh, and kiss, and dance and sing,
And gar the langest day seem short."

In the latter part of the seventeenth century, we meet with the contributions to the literature of the Tweed of the noble and heroic Lady Grizzel Baillie, a name that is synonymous with filial and wifely devotion, with courage, prudence, and sublime endurance. Born in 1665, she was the eldest daughter of Sir Patrick Home, afterwards the First Earl of Marchmont; and she became the wife, in 1692, of George Baillie of Jerviswood. She died in London in 1746, at the great age of eighty-one. Her elder daughter was married to a Peeblesshire laird, Sir Alexander Murray of Stanhope, a man of eccentric character and jealous temper, but of accomplished tastes. We have still traces of his handiwork in the rich English landscape of hedge rows and stately trees, which are to be found in the pleasant haugh of the Tweed, from the Crown Ford to Stobo Burn Foot, the Polternam of the Cymri. Lady Murray of Stanhope was well known in London in the middle and latter part of the eighteenth

century as the most accomplished singer of Scotch melodies in her day. The estates of Stanhope and Hillhouse passed, in 1769, from the Murrays, owing to their participation in the Rebellion.

Lady Baillie's most important song is entitled, *Were na my Heart Licht I Wad Dee.* It was apparently printed for the first time in the *Tea Table Miscellany.* The burden of it is that a lass engaged to be married is prevented by the relations of the youth from completing the engagement. It is a fine specimen of the pure Doric Scotch of the time, and has wonderfully beautiful touches of natural feeling, pathos, and humour:—

"When bonnie young Johnie cam' ower the sea,
He said he saw naething sae lovely as me;
He hecht me baith rings and monie braw things;
And were na my heart licht I wad dee.

His wee wilfu' tittie she looed na me,
(I was taller and twice as bonnie as she);
She raised sic a pouther 'twixt him and his mother,
That were na my heart licht I wad dee.

His kin was for ane of a higher degree,
Said—Would he wed ane was landless like me?
Albeit I was bonnie, I was na for Johnie,
And were na my heart licht I wad dee.

* * * * * * *

His tittie she was baith wylie and slee,
She spied me as I cam ower the lee;
And then she ran in and made sic a din,
Believe your ain een an' ye trow na me.

His bonnet stood aye fu' round on his broo;
His auld ane look'd aye as weel as some's new;
But noo he lets' t wear ony gait it will hing,
And casts himself dowie upon the corn-bing.

And now he gaes daundrin' aboot the dykes,
And a' he dow do is to hund the tykes;
The live-lang nicht he ne'er steeks his e'e;
And were na my heart licht I wad dee.

Were I young for thee as I hae been,
We should hae been gallopin' down on yon green,
And linkin' it on yon lily-white lea;
And wow! gin I were but young for thee!"

The same true and tender hand has left us two stanzas of great simplicity and beauty, entitled *O, the Ewe Buchtin's Bonnie*, which seem to be the echo of her own grief at one time of her life:—

"O, the ewe buchtin's bonnie, baith e'ening and morn,
When our blithe shepherds play on the bog-reed and horn;
While we're milkin', they're liltin', baith pleasant and clear,
But my heart's like to break when I think on my dear.

O, the shepherds take pleasure to blow on the horn,
To raise up their flocks o' sheep soon i' the morn;
On the bonnie green banks they feed pleasant and free,
But, alas, my dear heart, all my sighing's for thee!"

A contemporary name of note associated with the history and poetry of Tweeddale is that of Dr. Alexander Pennycuik of Newhall. He was not a song-writer; but he has left a number of pieces in verse of considerable general and

local interest. His father, also Dr. Alexander Pennycuik of Newhall, and the representative of the old family of Pennycuik of Pennycuik (*i. e.*, the Gowk's Hill), was surgeon to General John Bannier in the Swedish wars under the great Gustavus Adolphus, and surgeon also to the auxiliary Scots army in England during the troubled period that preceded the Restoration. The father married Janet Murray, the heiress of Romanno, leaving a son, the poet, and died after the Revolution of 1688. This son, the author of the *Description of Tweeddale* (1715), was born in 1652, and died in 1722. He was buried in the churchyard of Newlands by the side of his father. Dr. Pennycuik was assisted in his *Description of Tweeddale* by John Forbes, who succeeded him in the estate of Newhall. Pennycuik was a friend of Allan Ramsay; and it has been said that it was to Pennycuik that Ramsay owed the plot of *The Gentle Shepherd.* Dr. Pennycuik's poems, and their general characteristics, are well known. They are not without a certain amount of humour; and they are often very coarse in portraiture and suggestion—the taint of the times; yet they give a true, curious, often pointed, description of the rural life and manners of the period of the Restoration and the Revolution. They contain also many interesting references to names and families in Tweeddale, which now, alas! have ceased to be represented in the district; for, with one or two exceptions, the really old families of Tweeddale do not now hold the lands of the county; their memory has, in a great measure,

perished; and with their names have passed away many ennobling historical associations.

But in Dr. Pennycuik's poems, though he was in the habit of traversing Tweeddale, as a practising surgeon, we look in vain for any trace of feeling suggested by the scenery of the district in which he lived. There is not a single characteristic natural feature of Tweeddale in all his poems. In his lines entitled *To my Friend inviting him to the Country*, where we might expect some local description, all we get is this:—

> "Sir, fly the smoke and clamour of the town,
> Breathe country air, and see the farms cut down;
> Revel on nature's sweets, and dine upon the chief,
> Praising the granter of the plenteous sheaf;
> Free from all care, we'll range through various fields,
> Study those plants which mother nature yields:
> On Lyne's meand'ring brooks sometimes we'll fish,
> The trout's a brave, but no expensive dish;
> When limbs are wearied, and our sport is done,
> We'll trudge to Cant's Walls* by the setting sun."†

Dr. Pennycuik obviously represented that style of Scottish poetry, which contented itself with noting the manners of the time, mixing observation with shrewd judgment and sense; but feeling nothing of nature, and quite incapable of touching the heart by pathos, or filling the soul with imagery.

* A small inn that stood near Newlands Kirk, not far from Romanno, the residence of Dr. Pennycuik.

† *Poems*, p. 414.

XIII.

BORDER POETRY—EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

THE Earl of Stirling, Drummond of Hawthornden, Aytoun of Kinaldie, died before the middle of the seventeenth century. From that date down to the first quarter of the eighteenth, there appeared no Scottish poet of any public note. In the Lowland valleys and glens there had been heard during that period, and even long before it, scattered strains of Ballad and Song, many of them full of fine, simple, and truthful feeling. These were caught up and sung in the home circles and at the firesides of the Lowland farm-houses and shepherds' cots. But there was, as yet, no attempt at any single great poem. The spirit that was in the older ballads and songs had not yet been concentrated and distilled into one pure continuous melody.

James Watson, in his *Collection of Scots Poems Ancient and Modern*, published in three parts from 1706 to 1711, had drawn attention to some of those floating songs and ballads. And the *Evergreen* and *Tea Table Miscellany* of Allan Ramsay—both published in 1724—further enhanced

the interest in this line of literature. It was diligently cultivated by subsequent collectors. Percy's *Reliques*, which referred to both sides of the Border, in 1765 opened up the widest field of Ballad literature as yet disclosed. Percy was followed by David Herd, with his *Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs*, in 1769. Then there came Evans' *Old Ballads*, 1777; Pinkerton's *Scottish Tragic Ballads*, 1781, and his *Select Scottish Ballads*, 1783. Ritson began to publish books of songs in 1783, and continued down to 1795. James Johnson, in *The Scots' Musical Museum*, 1787, greatly aided the work; Burns contributing new songs. J. G. Dalzell, in 1801, gave *Scottish Poems of the Sixteenth Century*. Walter Scott, in 1802, gave the first two volumes of the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. The third volume appeared in 1803. This was a work second in importance and immediate influence only to that of Percy himself. In 1806, Robert Jamieson gave to the world his *Popular Ballads and Songs*, and pointed to the large Scandinavian element in our Ballad literature. Since then we find on the roll of distinguished collectors and editors, Finlay, David Laing, C. K. Sharpe, Maidment, Utterson, Buchan, Allan Cunningham, Kinloch, Motherwell, R. Chambers, Peter Cunningham, Aytoun, Chappell, Child, etc.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, the best representative of the stilted artificialism of his time, sneered, as was to be expected, at the labours of Percy. But the resuscitated ballads and songs were true to natural feeling and to the primary and per-

manent human emotions; and, though they were but the material of a literature, they formed the well-spring of a new and free literary development, which, while it yields nothing in the power of imaginative creation to the old, and nothing really in point of true artistic perfection, far surpasses it in the freshness and the living power which truthful delineation of the facts of man's spiritual nature, and of the aspects of the world around him, alone can inspire.

But it was an original work which, in the early part of last century, first disclosed to the world the wealth of beauty in Scottish scenery, and the naturalness, simplicity, and pathos that lay close at hand in Scottish rural life. This was *The Gentle Shepherd*, published in 1725. The feeling for the natural scenery of Scotland had been growing in susceptible hearts in this first quarter of the century. James Thomson, the son of the Minister of Ednam, whose boyhood had been passed at Southdean, high up among the wild and striking hills which slope down to the picturesque and beautifully wooded valley of the Jed, carried with him to England haunting impressions of winter storms which had swept the Carter Fell, and passed over rugged Ruberslaw. And, a year after *The Gentle Shepherd*, there appeared *Winter*, a poem, followed in 1727 by *Summer*. Thomson dared to be true to the face of nature, and to make the delineation of it the all-sufficient object of poetry. And it enhances the merit of the poet that in this, a new form of poetic art, he was thoroughly successful, and influenced the

eighteenth century literature of Britain, indeed all British literature since his time. But *The Gentle Shepherd* was more immediately powerful in Scotland. Ramsay's poem drew attention to the Lowland and pastoral scenery of Scotland; and hence naturally to the vales of the Tweed, the Teviot, and the Yarrow. It thus became the fashion of the versifiers of the time to choose for the scenery and the subjects of their songs the pastoral localities and legendary incidents of those streams. This tendency has continued down to our own time, and, looking back over the hundred and fifty years that have elapsed since Ramsay evoked the full power of Scottish Song, and gave it its pastoral impulse, we find a series of poets more or less inspired by the Tweed, the Yarrow, the Ettrick, and the Teviot, such as no other locality of Scotland can parallel in numbers or surpass in pathos, tenderness, and truthfulness. Besides Ramsay himself, we have his friend Hamilton of Bangour, Robert Crawford, Logan, Leyden, Hogg, and Scott; and, if not in the same rank with these, yet we have true singers in James Nichol, Thomas Smibert, Henry Scott Riddell, and several others. The power, too, of the scenery, and the poetic strains which it has inspired, are seen in men who were neither natives of nor resident in the district, as Robert Ferguson, Langhorne, and Wordsworth. Besides all these, there has been in the district itself many a local poet, unknown to public fame, who nevertheless felt the power of the scenery and the charm and humour of the simple manners of the people, and who was a

source of pleasure, cheerfulness, and refinement in his own small circle. Alas! that so few of these singers have left behind them even the memory of their names. But, looking at the whole, we may well ask: Did ever single Scottish or other stream quicken in the hearts of men such a flow of song as that which has been inspired by the Tweed and its tributary waters?

It is true, as John Ruskin has remarked, true however we may explain it, that the scenery most fruitful of literary intellect is not the absolutely mountainous nor the perfectly flat; it is the mixture of hill and vale. Neither Switzerland nor Holland has been most prolific in poetry or high literature. In the ancient world, the human intellect rose to its greatest fulness, and acquired its highest finish amid the hills, the valleys, and the gleaming waters of Attica—a varied land of mountain and of glen. So we find one of the largest, richest crops, both of intellect and imagination, in that limited district which stretches from the Pentlands to the Cheviots and the Solway—The Border Land of Scotland. With the mountain there is constant struggle, with the pastoral plain there is easy repose; the mountain and the plain together call forth human energy and give human contentment; and on the life of energy and repose bloom the sweet flowers of song, and rise to maturity the growths of intellect.

Of Allan Ramsay's special contributions to the poetry of the Tweed and Yarrow, I am afraid I cannot speak

highly. His *Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow*, is indeed in the poorest conventional taste of last century—artificial, rhetorical, affected. His set of verses to the tune of *Busk Ye, Busk Ye, my Bonnie Bride** is better, and in it there is one fine natural touch :—

"To western breezes Flora yields,
And when the beams are kindly warming,
Blythness appears o'er all the fields,
And nature looks mair fresh and charming.

Learn frae the burns that trace the mead,
Tho' on their banks the roses blossom,
Yet hastilie they flow to Tweed,
And pour their sweetness in his bosom."

But, on the whole, James Hogg was not far wrong when he sung :—

"Redoubted Ramsay's peasant skill
Flung some strained notes along the hill ;
His was some lyre from lady's hall,
And not the mountain harp at all."

The next name of note in connection with the poetry of Tweedside is that of Robert Crawford, a cadet of the family of Drumsay in Renfrewshire, and a friend of Hamilton of Bangour, the author of *Busk Ye, Busk Ye, my Bonny, Bonny Bride.* Crawford was born about 1695, and he died in 1732, at the age of thirty-seven, that period of life so

* *Miscellany*, I., p. 139.

fatal to poetic genius. Crawford, though not a native of the district, seems to have been enamoured of Tweedside. He is the author of the songs entitled *Tweedside, Bush Aboon Traquair, Leader Haughs and Yarrow,* and several other kindred strains contributed to Allan Ramsay's *Tea Table Miscellany.* The finest of Crawford's songs is, no doubt, *Tweedside.* His general style partakes a good deal of the affectation and artificial mannerism of the time; but in *Tweedside* he has deeply felt and yielded to the freshness and truth of the nature which he seeks to describe. We feel that he has caught the characteristic features of the valley of the Tweed, and pictured for us a glorious spring day, in which birds sing, and the river glides brightly and gently, and the primroses spring in the woods, and the lambs bleat pathetically on the hills, and the whole air is filled with peace and love and gladness:—

"What beauties does Flora disclose!
How sweet are her smiles upon Tweed!
Yet Mary's, still sweeter than those,
Both nature and fancy exceed.

No daisy, nor sweet blushing rose,
Not all the gay flowers of the field,
Not Tweed, gliding gently through those,
Such beauty and pleasure does yield.

The warblers are heard in the grove,
The linnet, the lark, and the thrush;
The blackbird and sweet cooing dove,
With music enchant every bush.

Come, let us go forth to the mead,
Let us see how the primroses spring;
We'll lodge in some village on Tweed,
And love while the feather'd folk sing.

* * * * * * *

Say, charmer, where do thy flocks stray?
Oh, tell me at morn where they feed?
Shall I seek them on sweet winding Tay?
Or the pleasanter banks of the Tweed?"

The tradition is that this song of Crawford's was written in honour of Mary Lilias Scott, a very beautiful woman, known as "The Second Flower of Yarrow." Crawford has contributed another song to the minstrelsy of the Tweed. This is a new set of verses to the old air of *Cowden-knowes.** It is one of his finest; simple and natural in feeling and associations, and free, in a great measure, from the mannerism of the time:—

"When summer comes, the swains on Tweed
Sing their successful loves,
Around, the ewes and lambkins feed,
And music fills the groves.

But my loved song is then the broom
So fair on Cowdenknowes;
For sure so sweet, so soft a bloom
Elsewhere there never grows.

* * * * * * *

Not Teviot braes, so green and gay,
May with this broom compare;

* *Tea Table Miscellany*, II., p, 150, where it is simply marked "C." Herd attributes it to William Crawford.

Not Yarrow banks in flowery May,
  Nor the bush aboon Traquair.

More pleasing far are Cowden-knowes,
  My peaceful happy home,
Where I was wont to milk my ewes,
  At eve among the broom."

"The original Ballad of the Broom of Cowden-knowes" is given by Scott in the *Minstrelsy*.* Both tune and words are old. The *Tea Table Miscellany* has a set of words with the initials R. S., but it is inferior to Crawford's version. And it should be added that Crawford has entirely purified the coarseness of the old ballad. In this he follows quite the spirit of the older songs of Tweedside, which, with the somewhat qualified exception of the original version of *The Broom of the Cowden-knowes*, are lyrics of exceeding purity.

Among those who contributed to Ramsay's *Tea Table Miscellany* (1724), was a youth of twenty, of great and early promise, and of Jacobite leanings—the son of an Ayrshire laird, William Hamilton of Bangour, (born 1704, died 1754). His *Poems on Several Occasions* were first published in Glasgow, without the author's knowledge, in 1748; and were printed at the famous Foulis' press. Hamilton was a man of taste and feeling; but he was deeply imbued with the artificial spirit of the time, which, instead of looking at nature directly and with fresh eye, made a point of describing it in

* Vol. III., p. 37, ed. 1868.

traditional, unreal, and generally inappropriate language. This sort of diction was equally applicable or equally inapplicable to the aspects of nature, whether these belonged to a southern or a northern clime, to the wooded banks of the soft gliding Thames, or the bare haughs and hills of the speeding and sparkling Tweed.

There are, however, here and there in his writings descriptive pieces which rise above this level. One of these, curiously enough, is a picture of winter on Tweedside and on "the tops of Yair," which unquestionably suggested to Scott the very fine description of the same which he has given us in the introduction to Canto I. of Marmion. Here are Hamilton's lines: these, it will be observed, are in the octavo syllabic metre adopted by Scott:—

"For see the Summer posts away,
Sad emblem of our own decay.
Now Winter from the frozen north,
Drives his irón chariot forth;
His grizzly hand in icy chains
Fair Tweda's silver flood constrains.
Cast up thy eyes, how bleak and bare
He wanders on the tops of Yair.
Behold, his footsteps dire are seen
Confess'd on many a withering green!"*

Now let us hear what Sir Walter made of this hint. (The lines are well known, but I quote them for the sake of comparison):—

"No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed;

* Ode III.

No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam;
Away hath passed the heather-bell
That bloomed so rich on Needpath Fell;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister heights of Yair.
The sheep before the pinching heaven
To shelter'd dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines;
In meek despondency they eye
The wither'd sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill,
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill:
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold;
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast."

It will, I think, be allowed that the latter minstrel has, in richness and minuteness of pictorial power, far outstripped the earlier poet. Scott shows a courage and freedom in dealing with the familiar objects around him, and introducing them into his picture, which the earlier poet, bound as he was to abstract and conventional representation, would hardly have dreamed of.

There is one occasion on which Hamilton rises to a true and powerful grasp of the scene, in a description of the Rhone and the Aar:—

"More rapid rolls the Rhone, tumultuous flood,
All raging unwithheld and unwithstood;

In vain or fertile fields invite its stay,
In vain or roughest rocks oppose its way;
It bounds o'er all, and, insolent of force,
Still hurries headlong on a downward course."

There is a very strong and truthful picture of the scene in these lines, and the flow of the feeling is reflected in the rhythm of the verse.

But, amid the generally vague verbiage of his descriptions, one effort of his genius stands out in vividness of human colouring, in depth and simplicity of feeling, and even to some extent in powerful and characteristic touches of scenery. This is a poem which owes its inspiration to the Yarrow. In fact it was suggested by the older poem of *The Dowie Dens*. It breathes the soul of the place, and it is so permeated by the spirit of its history and traditions that, when all the other writings of the author shall have fallen into oblivion, there will still be a nook in memory and a place in men's hearts for *The Braes of Yarrow*. The burden of the ballad is a fine tragic incident; and it touches deeply our primary human emotions. It is the story of a maiden on the Yarrow who loved a youth; but he fell in single fight, by the hand of a Tweedside laird, who would fain gain the love of the maiden whose betrothed he had slain. The old wail of *The Douglas Tragedy* and of *The Dowie Dens* was sounding in the ear of the susceptible poet when he wrote the stanzas; and there can, I think, be as little doubt that the same wail,

echoing and re-echoing through the years, and intensified through the passionate feeling with which Hamilton of Bangour transmitted it onwards, was felt in the soul of Scott when he conceived the heart-stirring tragedy of *The Bride of Lammermuir;* and not less in the heart of Wordsworth, both when he imaged and when he saw the Yarrow.

In "The Ancient Scottish Manner"* Hamilton carries on the story by alternate dialogue, the most picturesque form of narrative poetry. In the opening stanzas, the Tweedside wooer, the slayer of him whom the maiden loved, thus addresses her:—

A. "Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow,
Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny bride,
And think nae mair on the braes of Yarrow.

B. Where gat ye that bonny, bonny bride?
Where gat ye that winsome marrow?
A. I gat her where I daurna weil be seen,
Pu'ing the birks on the braes of Yarrow!

B. Why does she weep, thy bonny, bonny bride,
Why does she weep, thy winsome marrow?
And why dare ye nae mair weil be seen
Pu'ing the birks on the braes of Yarrow?

A. Lang maun she weep, lang maun she, maun she weep,
Lang maun she weep with dule and sorrow,
And lang maun I nae mair weil be seen
Pu'ing the birks on the braes of Yarrow.

* "The Braes of Yarrow, to Lady Jane Home, in imitation of the ancient Scottish manner."—Hamilton of Bangour's *Poems*, p. 67.

For she has tint her luver, luver dear,
Her luver dear, the cause of sorrow,
And I hae slain the comeliest swain,
That e'er pu'd birks on the braes o' Yarrow.

* * * * * * * *

Sweet smells the birk, green grows, green grows the grass,
Yellow on Yarrow's banks the gowan,
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
Sweet the wave of Yarrow flowan.

Flows Yarrow sweet, as sweet, as sweet flows Tweed,
As green its grass, its gowan yellow,
As sweet smells on its braes the birk,
The apple frae the rock as mellow.

Fair was thy luve, fair, fair indeed thy luve,
In flowery bands thou him did'st fetter,
Tho' he was fair and weil beluv'd again,
Than me, he never lu'ed thee better.

Busk ye, then busk, my bonny, bonny bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow,
Busk ye, and lu'e me on the banks of Tweed,
And think nae mair on the braes of Yarrow."

She answers:—

"How can I busk a bonny, bonny bride,
How can I busk a winsome marrow,
How lu'e him on the banks of Tweed,
That slew my luve on the braes of Yarrow?

O Yarrow fields, may never, never rain,
No dew thy tender blossoms cover,
For there was basely slain my luve,
My luve, as he had not been a luver.

The boy put on his robes, his robes of green,
His purple vest, 'twas my awn seuing,
Ah! wretched me! I little ken'd
He was in these to meet his ruin.

The boy took out his milk white, milk white steed,
Unheedful of my dule and sorrow,
But e'er the toofall of the night
He lay a corpse on the Braes of Yarrow."

Then again, as if in a wild burst of despair she had consented to accept the murderer of her youthful lover, she says:—

"Yes, yes, prepare the bed, the bed of luve,
With bridal sheets my body cover,
Unbar, ye bridal maids, the door,
Let in the expected husband lover.

But who the expected husband, husband is?
His hands, methinks, are bathed in slaughter,
Ah, me! what ghastly spectre's yon,
Come, in his pale shroud, bleeding after.

Pale as he is, here lay him, lay him down,
O lay his cold head on my pillow;
Take aff, take aff, these bridal weids,
And crown my careful head with willow!

Pale tho' thou art, yet best, yet best belov'd,
O could my warmth to life restore thee,
Yet lie all night between my briests,
No youth lay ever there before thee.

Pale, pale indeed, O lovely, lovely youth,
Forgive, forgive so foul a slaughter,
And lie all night between my briests,
No youth shall ever lie there after."

In a piece so exquisite as this, it seems almost profanity to hint a blot. But there can be no doubt that the fine line—

"Fair hangs the apple frae the rock"—

is marred by conventionalism. "The apple" here is simply "the rowan," but the prevailing taste of the time did not allow the poet to express directly and truthfully the real object; yet would the line have been better, even in rhythm, author had been true to fact, and sung:—

"Fair hangs the rowan frae the rock."

Scott evidently caught Hamilton's suggestion here; for, in reference to the same locality, he says with simple, truthful literalness:—

"Yon lonely Thorn—would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell—
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan to the rock,
And through the foliage show'd his head,
With narrow leaves and berries red."

Hogg says of Hamilton:—

"Bangour the daring task essay'd,
Not half the chords his fingers play'd;
Yet even then some thrilling lays
Bespoke the Harp of ancient days."

Robert Fergusson, who was born in 1751, and died in 1774, at the early age of twenty-four, sung of the Tweed in his poem *The Rivers of Scotland.* Fine genius as he was, he has but caught some echoes of the theme, and his whole description is vague and characterless. But in *Hame Content*, a satire, he has touched the true soul of Scottish scenery and music, and done much greater justice to Bangour than Hogg did. There is a strong outburst of the *perfervidum* if the *ingenium Scotorum*, excusable in a poet:—

"The Arno and the Tiber lang
Hae run full clear in Roman sang;
But, save the reverence o' the schools,
They're baith but lifeless, dowie pools,
Dought they compare wi' bonny Tweed,
As clear as ony lammer* bead?
Or are their shores mair sweet and gay
Than Fortha's haughs, or banks of Tay?
Though there the herds can jink the showers,
'Mang thriving vines and myrtle bowers,
And blaw the reed to kittle strains,
While echo's tongue commends their pains;
Like ours, they canna warm the heart
Wi' simple, saft, bewitching art.
On Leader Haughs and Yarrow Braes,
Arcadian herds wad tyne their lays,
To hear the mair melodious sounds
That live on our poetic grounds.

Come, Fancy! come, and let us tread
The simmer's flowery velvet bed,
And a' your springs delightful lowse
On Tweda's bank or Cowden-knowes.

* Amber.

That, ta'en wi' thy enchanting sang,
Our Scottish lads may round thee thrang,
Sae pleased they'll never fash again
To court you on Italian plain;
Soon will they guess ye only wear
The simple garb o' nature here.

O Bangour! now the hills and dales
Nae mair gie back thy tender tales!
The birks on Yarrow now deplore
Thy mournfu' muse has left the shore.
Near what bright burn or crystal spring
Did you your winsome whistle hing?
The Muse shall there, wi' watery e'e,
Gie the dunk swaird a tear for thee;
And Yarrow's genius, dowie dame!
Shall then forget her bluid-stained stream,
On thy sad grave to seek repose,
Who mourned her fate, condoled her woes."

We now come to a very remarkable family group, who have contributed to the minstrelsy of the Borders. During the early part of the sixteenth century, the Elliots appeared in Liddesdale, probably as retainers of the Douglases. They had their principal seats at Lariston, beneath the high and wide-spreading fells of that wild and fascinating region, and at Redheugh on the Hermitage Water. Other places in Liddesdale were held by dependants of their name, as Park, and Copshaw. They were among the most noted of the Borderers for rude energy, rapine, and deadly feud. On the decay of the Douglases, the Elliots sided with the Scotts against the Kerrs, besides, doubtless, doing a good deal of

business for their own hand. There was the fight near Melrose, in July, 1526, for the rescue of the person of James V. from Angus, in which the Elliots are found allied with the Scotts:—

> "When Home and Douglas in the van
> Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
> Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
> Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear."

The Elliots were more fortunate than their Liddesdale compeers, the Armstrongs; for while the latter have quite disappeared as landed men, the former passed over into Teviotdale, and succeeded in obtaining a hold of lands there. They now occupy the ancient possessions mainly of the Turnbulls and the Rutherfords, names once of the greatest territorial importance. For, while Minto and Bedrule were originally the property of the Turnbulls, Wells was not less the territory of the Rutherfords. The Elliot stock of Lariston and Redheugh was represented by the family of Stobs, and a cadet of Stobs, one Gavin Elliot, was laird and miller of Midlem Mill, on the water of Ale, in the seventeenth century. Towards the end of that century, Gilbert Elliot, younger son of Gavin of Midlem Mill, became a writer in Edinburgh, afterwards passed at the Scottish Bar, rose to be a Lord of Session, and purchased the estate of Minto; was finally made a Baronet in 1700. Since then the vitality of the family has found outlet in law, statesmanship, as well as in arms, and hardly

less in culture and in song. Sir Gilbert Elliot, the second baronet of Minto, born in 1693, followed his father's profession, and became Lord-Justice-Clerk of Scotland. He was an accomplished Italian scholar, and was the author of the following pleasing verses in that language, written to the old Scotch tune of *The Yellow Hair'd Laddie*, itself supposed to be a production of Rizzio. There is a decided flavour of the Forest about them :—

"Veduto in prato
Il mio pastor,
Il crin coronato,
D'un serto di fior.

Il sole negli occhi,
La Fide nel sen'.
Ah ! dove s' asconde ?
Il caro mio ben' !

Al bosco, al monte,
La cereo in van,
E, presso al Fonte,
Non trove ch' il can ;

Ah ! cane Fedele
Deh ! dimmi perche,
Il mio crudele
S' asconde di me ?"

"In the meadow I saw him,
My shepherd, my own,
He wore on his forehead
Of sweet flowers a crown.

In his eyes was the sunshine,
Faith's home was his breast.
Ah! where is he hiding?
My loved one, my best!

By stream, grove, and mountain,
I sought him in vain;
I found his dog Fido!
I found not my swain.

Ah! Fido! dear Fido!
Come tell me, I pray,
Why my cruel one shuns me,
What keeps him away." *

The talents of the second baronet were transmitted to his eldest son, while his genius and taste shone even more brightly in his third daughter, Jean. The former, also Sir Gilbert, passed advocate in 1743, but devoted himself mainly to political life. He was for long Member of Parliament for Roxburghshire, and Treasurer of the Navy, a man expert and sagacious in affairs, and distinguished by literary taste. He was the author of the well-known pastoral lyric in the manner of Shenstone:—

" My sheep I neglected, I lost my sheep-hook,
And all the gay haunts of my youth I forsook;
No more for Amynta fresh garlands I wove;
For ambition, I said, would soon cure me of love.

Oh! what had my youth with ambition to do?
Why left I Amynta? Why broke I my vow?

* See *Border Memories*, p. 154, by W. Riddell Carre, Esq.

Oh, give me my sheep, and my sheep-hook restore,
And I'll wander from love and Amynta no more.

Through regions remote in vain do I rove,
And bid the wide ocean secure me from love!
Oh, fool! to imagine that aught could subdue
A love so well founded, a passion so true!

Alas! 'tis too late at thy fate to repine;
Poor shepherd, Amynta can never be thine:
Thy tears are all fruitless, thy wishes are vain,
The moments neglected return not again"

This is the song to which Scott has referred in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, when, speaking of Minto Crags, he says:—

"Cliffs which for many a later year
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
Ambition is no cure for love."

The third baronet died in 1777, and his son, the distinguished Governor-General of India, was created first Baron of Minto in 1797, and first Earl in 1814.

But it is to Jean Elliot, the sister of the author of this lyric, and third daughter of Sir Gilbert* the writer of the Italian song, that we owe something which we can never repay, and for which countless generations will bless her—one, and that the most delightful, version of *The Flowers of the Forest*:—

* While the brothers and sisters of Jean Elliot are carefully mentioned in Burke's *Peerage* (ed. 1875), Jean herself is ignored. Who is responsible for this omission?

"I've heard them liltin', at the ewe milkin',
Lasses a-liltin' before the dawn of day;
But now they are moanin' on ilka green loanin';*
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At bughts, in the mornin', nae blythe lads are scornin',
The lasses are lonely and dowie and wae;
Nae daffin', nae gabbin', but sighin' and sabbin',
Ilk ane lifts her leglin,† and hies her away.

In ha'rst, at the shearin', nae youths now are jeerin';
The bandsters are lyart, and runkled, and gray;
At fair, or at preachin', nae wooin', nae fleechin',‡
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At e'en in the gloamin', nae younkers are roamin'
'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle to play;
But ilk maid sits drearie, lamentin' her dearie—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Dule and wae for the order sent our lads to the Border!
The English, for ance, by guile wan the day;
The Flowers of the Forest, that foucht aye the foremost,
The prime o' our land, are cauld in the clay.

We'll hear nae mair liltin' at the ewe-milkin',
Women and bairns are heartless and wae;
Sighin' and moanin' on ilka green loanin'—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away."

Of the authoress of these lines we know but little. She was born at Minto House, in Teviotdale, the seat of the family, in 1727, and she died in 1805 at Mount Teviot, then in the occupation of her brother, Admiral Elliot. She lived

* Pasture field. † Milk-pail. ‡ Flattering.

and died unmarried, greatly devoted to her father. She is described as possessing "a sensible face, a slender, well-shaped figure. In manner grave and reserved to strangers. In her conversation she made no attempts at wit, and, though possessed of imagination, she never allowed it to entice her from the strictest rules of veracity. She had high aristocratic notions, which she took no pains to conceal." This is the writing of one intimately acquainted with Miss Elliot. She evidently led a simple and uneventful spinster life, spent chiefly in Brown Square, Edinburgh, not far from the town residence of her family, Minto House.*

The occasion of the composition of *The Flowers of the Forest* was this. When a young woman, Miss Elliot was riding home in a carriage after nightfall to Minto House, from a party with her brother Gilbert; the conversation turned on Flodden, that disaster which left a sadness on the hearts of Scotchmen and Scotchwomen for three hundred years. The brother suggested to the sister, not perhaps believing much in her capacity for it, that this was a fitting subject for a song. She leant backwards in the carriage; and there, under the shadow of the nightfall, with the old refrain, "The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away," sounding in her ear, as a stray echo from the past, and mingling in fancy with the scenery of her life and love, and under the kindling of her true human heart, she framed *The Flowers of the Forest;* that immortal lyric, in which simple

* *Border Memories*, p. 160.

natural pictures of joy and sadness are so exquisitely blended and contrasted, in which pathos of heart and patriotism of spirit, and a music that echoes the plaintive sough of the Border Waters, passed, as it were spontaneously, into one consummate outburst of song.

The other version of *The Flowers of the Forest* is due to Alison Rutherford, daughter of Robert Rutherford of Fernilee, the scion of an old Border House, Rutherford of Hundalee. The Rutherfords now are mainly decayed, but they are still represented by Fairnington and Edgerstone. Miss Rutherford became the wife of Patrick Cockburn, advocate, youngest son of Adam Cockburn, the Lord Justice Clerk of Scotland and brother of John Cockburn of Ormiston. She was born at Fernilee House, by the Tweed, in Selkirkshire, in 1712, and she died in 1794, at the age of eighty-two. Her song is probably a little older than that of Miss Elliot. It appears to have been printed in 1765, but probably it was written at a considerably earlier period, some twelve years before we have any traces of Miss Elliot's song, the date of which was about 1756. The lines are household words, yet a notice of the poetry of the Borders demands the insertion of the song in full:—

"I've seen the smiling
Of fortune beguiling,
I've felt all its favours, and found its decay;
Sweet was its blessing,
Kind its caressing,
But now 'tis fled—fled far away.

I've seen the Forest
Adornéd the foremost,
With flowers of the fairest, most pleasant and gay;
Sae bonnie was their blooming!
Their scent the air perfuming!
But now they are wither'd, and a' wede away.

I've seen the morning,
With gold the hills adorning,
And loud tempest storming, before the mid-day;
I've seen Tweed's sillar streams,
Glittering in the sunny beams,
Grow drumly and dark, as they roll'd on their way.
O fickle Fortune!
Why this cruel sporting?
Oh, why still perplex us, poor sons of a day?
Nae mair your smiles can cheer me,
Nae mair your frowns can fear me,
For the Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away."

This song of Mrs. Cockburn's may have reference, as has been supposed, to a pecuniary disaster which overtook the Forest lairds and farmers in last century. But that of Miss Elliot, both from the circumstance of its composition and its special allusion, was certainly composed as a memory of Flodden. If a comparison might be made between the two songs—both exquisite in themselves—it might be said that Miss Elliot's song has far more of local allusion, and contains many brief and touching pictures of the simple manners of the country-side, whereas Mrs. Cockburn's song, beautifully finished as it is, and, notwithstanding its thoroughly truthful allusion to the change from

gay to grave, as often symbolised in the daily flow of the Tweed, has, except in spirit, less of the character of a native production.

Both these songs owed part of their inspiration to the old tune of *The Flowers of the Forest*, which is to be found in the collection of John Skene of Hallyards, written between 1615 and 1620. To this tune there was a song as old as about the date of the battle of Flodden. The writers of both the modern versions must have known the ancient tune, and fragments of the earlier song. The line

"I have heard them liltin' at the ewes milkin',"

and the refrain,

"The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away,"

are ancient. There is also a picturesque and touching line of the old song, which brings back past manners in a most pathetic image :—

"I ride single on my saddle,
For the Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away."

John Armstrong, M.D., son of the minister of Castleton, in Liddesdale, was born in 1709, and died in 1779. A physician by profession, he embarked on a literary life in London, was the friend of Thomson and of Mallet, and wrote, among other poems, *The Art of Preserving Health*

(1744). In his description of angling in this poem, he recurs with great fondness and feeling to the scenes of his youthful days on the banks of the Liddel:—

"The crystal rivulet, that o'er
A stony channel rolls its rapid maze,
Swarms with the silver fry. Such, through the bounds
Of pastoral Stafford, runs the brawling Trent;
Such Eden, sprung from Cumbrian mountains; such
The Esk o'erhung with woods; and such the stream
On whose Arcadian banks I first drew air,
Liddel; till now except in Doric lays
Tuned to her murmurs by her love-sick swains,
Unknown in song, though not a purer stream,
Through meads more flowery, more romantic groves,
Rolls towards the western main. Hail, sacred flood!
May still thy hospitable swains be blessed
In rural innocence; thy mountains still
Teem with the fleecy race; thy tuneful woods
For ever flourish; and thy vales look gay
With painted meadows and the golden grain!

Oft, with thy blooming sons, when life was new,
Sportive and petulant, and charmed with toys,
In thy transparent eddies have I laved:
Oft traced with patient steps thy fairy banks,
With the well-imitated fly to hook
The eager trout, and with the slender line
And yielding rod solicit to the shore
The struggling panting prey; while vernal clouds
And tepid gales obscured the ruffled pool,
And from the depths called forth the wanton swarms."

William Julius Mickle, born 1743, died 1788, was the son of the minister of Langholm. There he spent the first

twelve years of his life. It is interesting to find that, after a chequered career in England and abroad, the translator of *The Lusiad*, and the author of *Cumnor Hall*, fondly returned in imagination, towards the close of his life, to the haunts of his boyhood by the waters of the Esk and the Ewes. The last production of his muse was *Eskdale Braes*. The feeling for the scenery of these dales is true, tender, and full. In this respect the poem is so modern in tone as to rank as a very close precursor of the latest lyrics of the Borders:—

"By the banks of the crystal-stream'd Esk,
Where the Wauchope her yellow wave joins,
Where the lambkins on sunny braes bask,
And wild wood-bine the shepherd's bower twines,

Maria, disconsolate maid!
Oft sighed the still noontide away,
Or by moonlight all desolate strayed,
While woeful she tuned her love lay:

Ah, no more from the banks of the Ewes,
My shepherd comes cheer'ly along,
Broomholm and the Deansbanks refuse
To echo the plaints of his song.

No more from the echoes of Ewes,
His dog fondly barking I hear;
No more the tired lark he pursues,
And tells me his master draws near.

Ah, woe to the wars and the pride,
Thy heroes, O Esk, could display,

When with laurels they planted thy side,
From France and from Spain borne away.

Oh, why did their honours decoy
My poor shepherd lad from the shore;
Ambition bewitch'd the vain boy,
And oceans between us now roar.

Ah, methinks his pale corse floating by,
I behold on the rude billows tost;
Unburied his scattered bones lie,
Lie bleaching on some desert coast.

By this stream of the May-blossomed thorn,
That first heard his love-tale and his vows,
My pale ghost shall wander forlorn,
And the willow shall weep o'er my brows.

With the ghosts of the Waas will I wail,
In Warblaw woods join the sad throng,
To Hallow E'en's blast tell my tale,
As the spectres, ungraved, glide along.

Still the Ewes rolls her paly blue stream,
Old Esk still his crystal tide pours,
Still golden the Wauchope waves gleam,
And still green, O Broomholm, are thy bowers

No; blasted they seem to my view,
The rivers in red floods combine;
The turtles their widow'd notes coo,
And mix their sad ditties with mine.

Discolour'd in sorrow's dim shade,
All nature seems with me to mourn—
Straight the village-bells merrily play'd
And announced her dear Jamie's return.

The wood-lands all May-blown appear,
  The silver streams murmur new charms,
As, smiling, her Jamie drew near,
  And all eager sprung into her arms."

This song is somewhat laboured, and deficient in ease of turn; but the fusion of the love emotion with the aspects of nature, their mutual colouring and transfiguration, strongly forecast the peculiar character of the nineteenth century love lyrics of Scotland. It is, in a word, the spirit of Tannahill, without the perfection of his art. The natural spirit comes first; and expression has to grow to finish through the years.

The Rev. John Logan was a contemporary of Mickle. He was born at Soutra, in the parish of Fala, on the southern extremity of Mid Lothian, in 1748. He was one of the ministers of Leith from 1773 to 1786, when he resigned his charge, and settled in London. He died in 1788. In 1770 appeared *Poems on Several Occasions by Michael Bruce*, under the editorship of Logan, though his name was not given. Of the poems in this volume, Logan ultimately claimed as his own the story of Levinia, the Ode to Paoli, and the Cuckoo. The authorship of the last—one of the most exquisite poems in the language—is still a matter of controversy between the friends of Bruce and Logan.

Logan, like Hamilton of Bangour, caught inspiration from

the Yarrow. It is the same strain of disappointed love. The loss of the lover in Logan's *Braes of Yarrow*—as in *Willie 's Rare and Willie 's Fair*—is due to the accident of drowning in the troubled and flooded stream. We have here also an illustration of how the Yarrow may appear joyous to the gladsome heart, and sad to the saddened spirit:—

"Thy braes were bonny, Yarrow stream!
When first on them I met my lover,
Thy braes, how dreary, Yarrow stream!
When now thy waves his body cover!

For ever now, O Yarrow stream!
Thou art to me a stream of sorrow;
For never on thy banks shall I
Behold my love, the flower of Yarrow."

Then comes a stanza which, for directness and vividness of suggestion—not speaking to the ear, but telling the incident to the imagination—is one of the most finished and impressive in poetry:—

"His mother from the window looked,
With all the longing of a mother;
His little sister weeping walk'd
The green-wood path to meet her brother;

They sought him east, they sought him west,
They sought him all the forest thorough;
They only saw the cloud of night,
They only heard the roar of Yarrow!"

There were two men in last century who, though not natives of the Border Land, have yet referred to it in poetry. The first name is that of an English clergyman, who has taken a place among the classical poets of Britain —at least his works are published in the series of one hundred volumes of the British poets. I refer to the Rev. John Langhorne. He was born at Kirby Stephen in 1735, and died at Blagdon in Somersetshire, of which he was Rector, in 1779.

Churchill had attacked Lord Bute and Scotland in his *Prophecy of Famine.* To counteract, if possible, the sarcasm of the *Prophecy*, Langhorne published, in 1763, *Genius and Valour, a Scottish Pastoral*, which he inscribed to Lord Bute, "as a tribute of respect from an impartial Englishman." Principal Robertson, three years after the publication, sent to Langhorne a complimentary letter, with a diploma of the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of Edinburgh.*

Genius and Valour has the usual defects of the time; it abounds in vague epithets and generalised phraseology that have no special application to the natural scenes described. Still, the poet has caught something of the echo of the places referred to, and their traditions. One or two lines will suffice as specimens:—

"Where Tweed's fair streams in liberal beauty lie,
And Flora laughs beneath a lucid sky;

* *British Poets, Langhorne*, Vol. LXV., p. 12.

Long winding vales where crystal waters lave,
Where blithe birds warble and where green woods wave,
A bright hair'd shepherd in young beauty's bloom,
Tuned his sweet pipe behind the yellow broom."

These lines sound well; but that is all that is meritorious about them. There is in such lines as these really not one characteristic epithet of the Tweed. They are an example simply of a mixture or make up of certain approved ingredients for river scenery.

Langhorne does much better when he refers with manly indignation to the atrocities of the days of the Restoration—that cruelest, basest, and foulest time of English history:—

"When through thy fields destructive rapine spread,
Nor sparing infant's tears, nor hoary head;
In those dread days the unprotected swain
Mourned on the mountains o'er his wasted plain;
Nor longer vocal with the shepherd's lay
Were Yarrow banks or groves of Endermay."

His reference to Thomson—the author of *The Seasons*—who was brought up on the banks of the Tweed and the Jed, and imbibed his love of nature there, and on the slopes of the Cheviots, is well-turned:—

"Soon wandering fearless many a muse was seen
On the dun mountain and the wild wood green;
Soon, to the warblings of the pastoral reed,
Started sweet echoes from the shores of Tweed.
O favoured stream, where thy fair current flows,
The child of nature, gentle Thomson, rose!
Young as he wander'd on thy flowery side,
With simple joy to see thy bright waves glide,

Thither in all thy native charms array'd
From climes remote the sister Seasons stray'd."

With all Langhorne's sweetness of versification, the Ettrick Shepherd formed a very fair estimate of him when he said:—

"Langhorne arriv'd from southern dale,
And chimed his notes on Yarrow vale;
They would not, could not touch the heart—
His was the modish lyre of art."

Alexander Geddes, LL.D., the son of a small farmer in Banffshire, was born in 1737, and he died in 1802. He was educated for the Roman Catholic priesthood, and, in 1765, became chaplain in the family of the sixth Earl of Traquair. The tradition is that a romantic attachment sprung up between the chaplain and one of the daughters of the house. But the lover sacrificed himself for the priest; and he left Traquair for France, where he prosecuted for a time his linguistic and critical studies. Geddes was a man of remarkable scholarly accomplishments, and greatly too liberal in his theological opinions for the authorities of his Church. Among other writings, he published two volumes of a translation of the Bible, in 1792 and 1797. The family of Traquair continued to befriend him during a somewhat chequered career. In 1781 he paid a visit to Charles, the seventh Earl, at Traquair House, and there wrote a poem entitled *Linton, a Tweeddale Pas-*

toral, in honour of the birth of a son and heir to the noble house. This son—Charles, Lord Linton—succeeded his father as eighth Earl in 1827, and died in 1861, when the earldom and barony became dormant.

Dr. Geddes is the author of the popular song *The Wee Wifukie*, and the fine Jacobite lyric *Lewie Gordon*. But neither Langhorne nor Geddes can be said to have added anything to the development of Tweedside poetry and song.

XIV.

MODERN PERIOD—LEYDEN, HOGG, AND SCOTT—RECENT POETS.

WHEN, about the beginning of the century, Walter Scott was busy collecting the materials of the *Minstrelsy*, he made the acquaintance of a youth of kindred spirit with his own—John Leyden. Leyden entered into the work with characteristic enthusiasm, and contributed more perhaps than any other assistant of Scott to form the first two volumes of 1802. Leyden was a typical Scotchman, we may say a typical Borderer. His career from his birth in 1775, in the lowly cottage at Denholm, under the slopes of the rugged Ruberslaw, then darkly clothed with heather, to his death, in 1811, in Java, at the early age of thirty-six, is one of the most self-dependent, manly, and energetic on record. His was one of those "broken lives" with lofty promise and purpose unfulfilled, which add to the mysteries and unavailing regrets incidental to our present state. The muse of Scottish poetry and the muse of Eastern learning might equally mourn his untimely fate:—

"His bright and brief career is o'er,
And mute his tuneful strains;
Quenched is his lamp of varied lore,
That loved the light of song to pour;
A distant and a deadly shore
Has Leyden's cold remains."

Or, as Hogg has finely said of him:—

"Sweet rung the harp to Logan's hand:
Then Leyden came from Border Land,
With dauntless heart and ardour high,
And wild impatience in his eye.
Though false his tones at times might be,
Though wild notes marr'd the symphony
Between, the flowing measure stole
That spoke the Bard's inspired soul.
Sad were those strains, when hymn'd afar,
On the green vales of Malabar:
O'er seas beneath the golden morn,
They travell'd, on the monsoon borne,
Thrilling the heart of Indian maid,
Beneath the wild Banana's shade.
Leyden, a shepherd wails thy fate,
And Scotland knows her loss too late!"

Leyden made two contributions of Border Ballads to the *Minstrelsy—Lord Soulis* and *The Cout of Keeldar.** These were of the romantic type, and a true outcome of the old spirit. They were, besides, among the first of the modern Border ballads which showed that loving sympathy with the aspects of hill, stream and glen, as objects of poetic interest, which has since become an independent element in the poetry of the district:—

* Vol. III., p. 249, 288.

"But onward, onward Keeldar past,
Swift as the winter wind,
When, hovering on the driving blast,
The snow flakes fall behind.

They pass'd the muir of berries blae,
The stone cross on the lee;
They reach'd the green, the bonny brae,
Beneath the birchen tree.

This is the bonny brae, the green,
Yet sacred to the brave,
Where still, of ancient size, is seen,
Gigantic Keeldar's grave.

The lonely shepherd loves to mark
The daisy springing fair,
Where weeps the birch of silver bark,
With long dishevell'd hair.

The grave is green, and round is spread
The curling lady-fern;
That fatal day the mould was red,
No moss was on the cairn."

Leyden's chief poem is *The Scenes of Infancy*, laid mainly in Teviotdale, his native valley. Its references and descriptions are not, however, confined to the vale of the Teviot itself—some thirty miles of varied and picturesque country. These extend to the whole district anciently known as Teviotdale, the tract of country between the north-western watershed of the Teviot and the ridge of the Cheviots. The poem was finally revised for publication on the eve of his departure for India. It is deficient

in connection and unity; but is, at the same time, of remarkable merit. The feelings and impressions of early boyhood, the stories and traditions he had learnt in youth, are fused with passages of local description of great vividness and power. He has an intensity of feeling which reminds one of Burns, and we see in him those influences of story and locality at work which subsequently nourished and developed to greater perfection the genius of his more fortunate compeer and friend—Walter Scott.

The Fourth Part of the *Scenes* contains a passage too characteristic of the poet and the man to be passed over. On a morning in November, 1790, when a lad of fifteen, he set out from his father's cottage at Denholm on a long day's journey to Edinburgh, to commence attendance on the classes of the University there, with a view to study for the Church. His father, a worthy farm-grieve, accompanied him half way with a horse, which father and son rode alternately. Then the youth was left to finish the journey by himself on foot. He pursued his way alone, unaccompanied save by what only the future poet would have noticed—his own shadow. And thus, years afterwards, when the whole scene had become a pleasant memory, he beautifully alludes to the incident:—

> "Once more, inconstant shadow! by my side
> I see thee stalk with vast gigantic stride,
> Pause when I stop, and when I careless bend
> My steps, obsequiously their course attend;

So faithless friends, that leave the wretch to mourn,
Still with the sunshine of his days return;
Yet oft, since first I left these valleys green,
I, but for thee, companionless had been.
To thee I talk'd, nor felt myself alone,
While summer suns and living moonbeams shone.
Oft, while an infant, playful in the sun,
I hoped thy silent gambols to outrun,
And, as I viewed thee ever at my side,
To overleap thy hastening figure tried.
Oft, when with flaky snow the fields were white,
Beneath the moon I started at thy sight,
Ey'd thy huge stature with suspicious mien,
And thought I had my evil genius seen.
But when I left my father's old abode,
And thou the sole companion of my road,
As sad I paused, and fondly looked behind,
And almost deemed each face I met unkind,
While kindling hopes to boding fears gave place,
Thou seem'dst the ancient spirit of my race.
In startled Fancy's ear I heard thee say:
'Ha! I will meet thee after many a day,
When youth's impatient joys, too fierce to last,
And fancy's wild illusions, all are past;
Yes! I will come when scenes of youth depart,
To ask thee for thy innocence of heart.'"*

Among his numerous local allusions, Leyden has noted a fact which is of the greatest interest to the student of the aesthetic feeling for nature, whether in Border or in British poetry. The eighteenth century heartlessness and conventionalism, so far as any feeling for nature and truthfulness of description are concerned, are well known. One of the men who broke through the hollow style, and brought

* *Scenes of Infancy*, Part IV.

men face to face with the real outward world of sight and sound, and touched, too, not unfrequently on some of its finest lessons, was James Thomson, a son of the Scottish Manse. His father, at first minister of Ednam on the Eden, in the Merse, was translated, while his son was still a boy, to Southdean, high up on the Jed, in the folds of the Cheviots. There the poet of *The Seasons* learned his love of free nature, saw the grandest things he has pictured, saw especially that winter storm which haunted his memory, until imagination idealised it years afterwards when he wrote on the banks of the Thames. It was thus that the life-blood of the Border country and the spirit of its scenery were poured into the sickly heart of the British poetry of nature. Leyden has sketched the rise of Thomson's genius in nervous verse, which shows the spirit of observation and fidelity to the outward aspect of things, characteristic of himself, as well as of the man whom he depicts:—

"To thee fair Jed! a holier wreath is due,
Who gav'st thy Thomson all thy scenes to view,
Bad'st forms of beauty on his vision roll,
And mould to harmony his ductile soul;
Till Fancy's pictures rose, as nature bright,
And his warm bosom glowed with heavenly light.

In March, when first elate on tender wing,
O'er frozen heaths the lark essays to sing;
In March, when first, before the lengthening days,
The snowy mantle of the earth decays,

The wreaths of crusted snows are painted blue,
And yellowy moss assumes a greener hue—
How smil'd the bard, from winter's funeral urn
To see more fair the youthful earth return!
When morn's wan rays with clearer crimson blend,
And first the gilded mists of spring ascend,
The sun-beams swim through April's silver showers,
The daffodils expand their yellow flowers,
The lusty stalk with sap luxuriant swells,
And, curling round it, smile the bursting bells,
The blowing king-cup bank and valley studs,
And on the rosiers nod the folded buds;
Warm beats his heart to view the mead's array,
When flowers of summer hear the steps of May.

But, when the wintry blast the forest heaves,
And shakes the harvest of the ripen'd leaves;
When brighter scenes the painted woods display
Than fancy's fairy pencil can portray,
He pensive strays, the sadden'd groves among,
To hear the twittering swallows' farewell song.
The finch no more on pointed thistle feeds,
Pecks the red leaves, or crops the swelling seeds;
But water-crows by cold brook-margins play,
Lave their dark plumage in the freezing spray,
And, wanton, as from stone to stone they glide,
Dive at their beckoning forms beneath the tide.
He hears at eve the fetter'd bittern's scream,
Ice-bound in sedgy marsh, or mountain stream,
Or sees, with strange delight, the snow clouds form
When Ruberslaw conceives the mountain storm;
Dark Ruberslaw! that lifts his head sublime,
Rugged and hoary with the wrecks of time!
On his broad misty front the giant wears
The horrid furrows of ten thousand years;
His aged brows are crown'd with curling fern,
Where perches, grave and lone, the hooded Erne,

Majestic bird! by ancient shepherds styled
The lonely hermit of the russet wild,
That loves amid the stormy blast to soar,
When through disjointed cliffs the tempests roar,
Climbs on strong wing the storm, and, screaming high,
Rides the dim rack that sweeps the darken'd sky.

Such were the scenes his fancy first refin'd,
And breathed enchantment o'er his plastic mind,
Bade every feeling flow, to virtue dear,
And formed the poet of the varied year."*

Of the three greatest names in modern Border Poetry—Leyden, Hogg, and Scott—Leyden is the earliest of the three; and he has made to it an important and characteristic contribution. He was the first fully to feel and to depict the power of the scenery of the Borders, whether the soft and tender, or the wild and grand, such as he found it in the haughs and hills, in the summer gleams, and the winter storms of his native Teviotdale. He was faithful to what he saw around him; he was bold enough to treat it as a self-sufficient object of poetic art. If the *Scenes of Infancy* be not a very finished or consecutive poem—rather a series of pictures and allusions, art working, too, upon a certain tumultuous feeling, of which it did not quite obtain the mastery—the poem is at least the courageous expression of a pure heart, a faithful observation, and a fine fancy revelling in a new and fresh field, which was rich in wealth and blessing for the future.

* *Scenes of Infancy*, Part III.

In the spring of 1813 there appeared a poem with the following dedication :—

"*TO*
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS
PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF WALES,
A SHEPHERD
AMONG THE MOUNTAINS OF SCOTLAND
DEDICATES THIS POEM."

The shepherd in this act, somewhat boldly but not inappropriately, laid at the feet of high rank the offering of high genius; for the "Poem" was none other than *The Queen's Wake.*

Although its author never acquired much art in constructing a story, or skill in depicting character, and his composition both in prose and verse is frequently disfigured by mean and coarse expressions, the Ettrick Shepherd yet stands out in this century as one of the Scotchmen of truest, finest native genius—filling a place in Scottish poetry which is unique, having done certain things which no other Scottish poet has done so well. Born in a cottage near Ettrick Kirk as early as 1770—though he himself gives the year as 1772—the Shepherd, at the date of the dedication of *The Wake*, was forty-three; and it was not till now that his genius blossomed and fruited, never again in his life with such a wealth of poesy. Every Borderer ought to have a kindly word and a corner of admiration in his heart for James Hogg—man and poet. For when shall we see

such another shepherd? There is not in all Border history a more complete type of a man of power nourished by the Border glens and streams, haughs and hills, story, ballad, and tradition, than he. There is no more complete example anywhere of the rise to intellectual eminence of a nearly entirely self-taught man. In this respect even Burns had advantages superior to his. Sent to herd ewes when he was but seven years old, he suffered all the hardships of *orra* farm work, till he was sixteen, when, with great pride, he attained to the dignity of a shepherd with a *hirsel*, and in this capacity he remained until he was thirty. In all that time he had but half a year's schooling, at desultory intervals—from which he carried away a little reading and a penmanship that could hardly be called penmanship. Hogg in fact taught himself to read; he taught himself to write, and he taught himself to rhyme; for, though the soul of poetry was in him from the beginning, he had at first a very imperfect sense of rhyme, and it was only after many trials and long and patient labour that he attained to "the accomplishment of verse"—strange as this may seem to those who know and feel the exquisite melody of many of his lines.

But, imperfect as his school instruction was, he had a source of education, and to him inspiration, which, to a man of deep and impassioned soul, is the best of all. He had a noble mother—a good, true, and tender woman, assiduous in daily duty, with a freshness of heart and a quickness of

head that brightened toil—Margaret Laidlaw, let us record her name. From her he learned, and learned to feel the legendary lore, story, tradition, song, and ballad of the district. This was the seed out of which his genius was ultimately, though slowly, developed. Hogg was potentially a poet from his mother's knee; the efforts of his life were simply a struggle for expression—a struggle hindered of earlier success owing to his imperfect schooling. Let us hear from himself what nourished his genius, and note its beauty, its truth, and its power:—

"O list the mystic lore sublime,
Of fairy tales of ancient time!
I learned them in the lonely glen,
The last abodes of living men,
Where never stranger came our way,
By summer night, or winter day;
Where neighbouring hind or cot was none—
Our converse was with heaven alone—
With voices through the clouds that sung,
And brooding storms that round us hung.
Oh, lady! judge, if judge ye may,
How stern and ample was the sway
Of themes like these when darkness fell,
And gray-haired sires the tale would tell!
When doors were barred, and elder dame
Plied at her task beside the flame
That through the smoke and gloom alone
On dim and umber'd faces shone—
The bleat of mountain goat on high
That from the cliff came quavering by;
The echoing rock, the rushing flood,
The cataract's swell, the moaning wood;

The undefined and mingled hum,
Voice of the desert, never dumb!
All these have left within this heart
A feeling tongue can ne'er impart;
A wildered and unearthly flame,
A something that's without a name."

The spring time of his genius was the ten years from 1790 to 1800, when he herded at Blackhouse in the Douglas Burn, and had the advantage of the kindly sympathy, aid, and advice of his master's son—William Laidlaw—one who has left all too little for the lovers of simple pathos, and the well-wishers of the Scottish muse. I like to picture Hogg at this period as he herded on the Hawkshaw Rig up the Douglas Burn—a dark heathery slope of the Blackhouse Heights, which divides the Blackhope Burn from the other main feeders of the Douglas. There, on a summer day, during these ten years, you would find on the hill a ruddy faced youth, of middle height, of finely symmetrical and agile form, with beaming light blue eyes and a profusion of light brown hair that fell over his shoulders, long, fair, and lissome as a woman's. The time is between the middle of July and the middle of September, when his duty is to "summer the lambs." These had simply to be moved from place to place; and this was done by "Hector" or his successor—the shepherd's collie and friend. Now was the opportunity of the shepherd-student. With the lambs quietly pasturing, he sets to work, produces a sheet or two of paper folded and stitched, has an inkhorn stuck

in a hole of his waistcoat with a cork and a bit of twine, and a stump of a pen, and there he thinks out his verses, writes them, in fact, all through on the tablet of memory, and then commits the production which he has already finished and polished in his mind to paper. Is not thus the stanza which he addressed to trusty Hector in his old age most appropriate:—

> "When gazing o'er the Lowland dales,
> Despondence on the breeze shall flee;
> And muses leave their native vales
> To scale the clouds wi' you an' me."

What kind of poetic impulse and cast of genius was likely to come out of this? Let us look at the surroundings. It is a lone wild scene this Hawkshaw Rig. The grains of the burn spread out on each side, like arms stretched upwards, to the dark overhanging and environing heights of Blackhouse, scored deep with peat bogs, and suggestive of wild work of the winter wind and the winter night. These heights shut him in on the north and west, while on the east the benty moorland opens and widens to the head of the watershed of the Quair. There, on this moorland at the head of the Rispsyke, are the eleven stones—three erect, eight fallen—which mark the scene of the Douglas Tragedy. Below, in the valley of the Burn, as it sweeps to the Yarrow, is Blackhouse Tower, carrying the thought back along the chequered flow of Scottish story to the early kings, when, from that tower, or one on its

site, the lord of the Douglas Burn rode to a Parliament of Malcolm Canmore. Awe and solitude, legendary tale, and the shadows of old memories are all round about him. But there is also a sweet strange beauty, for the heather is in bloom, and there are numberless gentle birks down in the cleughs, and green spots of rare grassy beauty by the burnsides, and the many branched feeders of the burn themselves make a soft, pulsing, intermittent sough and hum, that charms the ear and inclines the soul to tenderness and pathos and all gentle thoughts and feelings. It is as if soft beauty of sight and sound lay quiet at the heart of solitude and fear.

Now it was here in these long summer days, that extend from morn to gloamin', and amid similar scenes in Ettrick and in Yarrow, that this simple, untaught, yet impassioned shepherd lad, with his heart full of the lore his mother and grey-haired men had taught him, developed the peculiar cast of his poetic genius. It was thus he learned to love simple, free, solitary nature so intensely; it was thus that his heart soared with, and yearned after, the *Skylark* of a morning, and swelled into lyric passion of an evening "*when the kye comes hame;*" it was thus he learned to conceive those exquisite visions of Fairy and Fairyland which he has embodied in *Kilmeny*, to feel and express the power of the awful and weird in a way such as almost no modern poet has expressed them, as in *The Fate of MacGregor*, *The Abbot MacKinnon*, *The Witch of Fife*, and others—to

revel, in a word, in a remote, ideal, super-sensible, yet most ethereal beauty and grandeur, which has a spell we do not seek to analyse. Away in the Blackhouse glen, remote from man and human life, alone with his bleating lambs and his dog, it is not wonderful that the shepherd passed into and soared so high in the world of vision. May we not pardon the vaunting stanza of his old age:—

> "I am a king! my regal sway
> Stretches o'er Scotland's mountains high,
> And o'er the fairy vales that lie
> Beneath the glimpses of the moon,
> Or round the ledges of the sky,
> In twilight's everlasting noon."*

I have spoken of Hogg's intense feeling for simple nature, and of its power over him as a means of culture. Let us hear what he himself says on this point, and with what pictorial power the man who had only half a year's schooling wrote of scenes which hundreds of men had lived among, and felt, it may be, in their hearts, but could not embody in words:—

> "The Bard on Ettrick's mountains green
> In Nature's bosom nursed had been,
> And oft had marked in forest lone
> Her beauties on her mountain throne;
> Had seen her deck the wild wood tree,
> And star with snowy gems the lea;
> In loveliest colours paint the plain,
> And sow the moor with purple grain;

* *Monitors*, p. 399.

By golden mead and mountain sheer,
Had viewed the Ettrick waving clear,
Where shadowy flocks of purest snow
Seemed grazing in a world below.

Oft had he viewed, as morning rose,
The bosom of the lonely Lowes,
Ploughed far by many a downy keel,
Of wild-duck and of vagrant teal.
Oft thrilled the heart at close of even,
To see the dappled vales of Heaven,
With many a mountain, moor, and tree,
Asleep upon the St. Mary;
The pilot swan majestic wind,
With all his cygnet fleet behind,
So softly sail and swiftly row,
With sable oar and silken prow.

Instead of war's unhallowed form,
His eye had seen the thunderstorm
Descend within the mountain's brim,
And shroud him in its chambers grim;
Then from its bowels burst amain
The sheeted flame and sounding rain,
And by the bolts in thunder borne,
The heaven's own breast and mountain torn;
The wild roe from the forest driven;
The oaks of ages peeled and riven;
Impending oceans whirl and boil,
Convulsed by nature's grand turmoil." *

What exquisite sweetness, melody, and truthfulness to nature have we here? It is the lyric at the close of *The Wake*:—

"The wreath lies on St. Mary's shore;
The mountain sounds are harsh and loud;

* *The Wake—Tenth Bard.*

The lofty brows of stern Clockmore
  Are visored with the moving cloud.

But winter's deadly hues shall fade
  On moorland bald and mountain shaw,
And soon the rainbow's lovely shade,
  Sleep on the breast of Bowerhope Law;

Then will the glowing suns of spring,
  The genial shower and stealing dew,
Wake every forest bird to sing,
  And every mountain flower renew.

But not the rainbow's ample ring,
  That spans the glen and mountain gray,
Though fanned by western breezes' wing,
  And sunned by summer's glowing ray,

To man decayed, can evermore
  Renew the age of love and glee!
Can ever second spring restore
  To my old mountain harp and me!

But when the hue of softened green
  Spreads over hill and lonely lea,
And lowly primrose opes unseen
  Her virgin bosom to the bee;

When hawthorns breathe their odours far,
  And carols hail the year's return;
And daisy spreads her silver star,
  Unheeded, by the mountain burn;

Then will I seek the aged thorn,
  The haunted wild and fairy ring,
Where oft thy erring numbers borne
  Have taught the wandering winds to sing."

The following stanzas, from the Shepherd's *Address to his Auld Dog Hector*, show the tender inner spirit of the man, and are not unworthy of Burns :—

" Come, my auld, towzy, trusty friend,
What gars ye look sae dung wi' wae?
D'ye think my favour's at an end,
Because thy head is turnin' gray?

Although thy strength begins to fail,
Its best was spent in servin' me ;
An' can I grudge thy wee bit meal,
Some comfort in thy age to gie?

* * * * * *

O'er past imprudence, oft alane,
I've shed the saut and silent tear ;
Then, sharin' a' my grief and pain,
My puir auld friend came snoovin' near.

For a' the days we've sojourned here,
And they've been neither fine nor few,
That thought possesst thee year to year,
That a' my griefs arose frae you.

Wi' waesome face and hingin' head,
Thou wadst hae pressed thee to my knee ;
While I thy looks as well could read,
As thou had'st said in words to me :—

' Oh, my dear master, dinna greet ;
What hae I ever done to vex thee?
See, here I'm cowrin' at thy feet,
Just take my life, if I perplex thee.

* * * * * *

'Whatever wayward course ye steer;
Whatever sad mischance o'ertake ye;
Man, here is ane will hold ye dear!
Man, here is ane will ne'er forsake ye!'

* * * * * *

When my last bannock's on the hearth,
Of that thou sanna want thy share;
While I hae house or hauld on earth,
My Hector shall hae shelter there.

And should grim death thy noddle save,
Till he has made an end o' me;
Ye'll lie a wee while on the grave
O ane wha aye was kind to thee."

That is true, simple, pathetic. It is exactly what a good-hearted shepherd would say to his dog, if he had the power of putting his feelings in words; and poetry cannot go deeper than the feelings of the heart.

Hogg was not less inspired than Leyden by the scenery of the Border Land, and he was, on the whole, very faithful to his impressions; but his special contribution to Border Poetry arose from his wondrous sense of the weird and awsome—of the super-sensible world of spirit which haunted the older imagination of men in the district—and from a most delicate perception of that ideal of Fairy which, too, had hung on the fancies of men for hundreds of years, but had never been so conceived and so expressed before. Both those feelings had their germ in local legend and tradition; but the sense of the awsome was nursed to maturity in the shepherd boy as he lay under the shadows of the Black

House Heights; and the dream of fairyland was borne in upon him by the beauty of the lonely green nooks of the burns, and the fairy knowes up the glens, and the mysterious silvery sounds that stray of a moonlit night on the sheeny moorlands of Ettrick.

On the genius of Walter Scott—unquestionably the greatest poet of the Borders—in imaginative literature the unapproached name in Scotland itself—I can touch in but a limited way. That genius is so full of wealth that it is hardly to be measured. Analysis and criticism readily give place to sympathy and admiration. I propose at present to look at Scott mainly as a poet, who drew his inspiration from the Border Land—in fact, from the Tweed, the Yarrow, and the Teviot. The Border Country, if not the place of his birth, was the land of his forefathers, with whom he connected himself by a vivid imagination; it was the land of his upbringing and culture, the land of his affections, and his home, and it is now sacred to us as the place of his grave. As far as locality can influence and modify genius, the Border Country made Walter Scott. From his childhood his senses and imagination were nourished by the scenery, the ballads, the stories, and legends of the district. It was at Sandyknowe and Smailholm that his genius felt its first dim promptings—

> "There was poetic impulse given
> By the green hill and clear blue heaven.

It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall flower grew,
And honeysuckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruined wall."

There his intense feeling for nature had its birth; and there, too, his imaginative love of legend and story and old feudal life was inspired and nourished:—

"And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvell'd as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitched my mind,
Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurred their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue.
And, home returning, fill'd the hall
With revel, wassail-rout, and brawl.
Methought that still with tramp and clang,
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,
Glared through the window's rusty bars."

There is a characteristic anecdote of him, relating to this early period of his life at Sandyknowe. It is told of him that in a thunderstorm, as a child, he was found lying on the green sward on his back, watching every flash of lightning, and shouting out "Bonny! Bonny!" There was in this the forecast of his peculiar genius. He found in what to others

had seemed simply terrible or awful, the grand and the sublime; a scene of fear passing through the alchemy of his imagination was transformed into a thing of beauty and delight.

Nothing seems to have impressed the young mind of Scott more deeply—nothing certainly was the source of a finer inspiration, than this old Tower of Smailholm—"situated on the northern boundary of Roxburghshire, among a cluster of wild rocks, called Sandyknowe Crags"—where his grandfather's farm-house lay, and where he spent a great part of his infancy. "This ancient fortress and its vicinity," he tells us, "formed the scene of the Editor's infancy, and seemed to claim from him this attempt to celebrate them in a Border Tale." And fortunate for the world it was that they did so; for out of this feeling sprung the ballad of *The Eve of St. John*, which was a type and a forecast of the very highest things which Scott did, even in his mature prime. For the spirit of the olden days, for the impression of the feelings and cast of thought of mediæval times, for weird power, Scott has written nothing superior to that grand yet simple rhyme.

The gathering together of the Border Ballads in the *Minstrelsy*, in the beginning of the century, was the discipline and preparation for his life-work. It was during his raids into Liddesdale, in quest of song and legend, with his friend Shortreed, that his genius had its bent fixed irrevocably; it was then it acquired the complete spontaneity which afterwards distinguished it. "He was makin' himsel," as Shortreed

pithily observed, "and he didna ken o't." Those ballads which he found had been long working in quiet localities on the minds of the people. The romantic muse had visited with fine visions of the past many a peasant home, and cheered and thrilled the breast of many a solitary shepherd on the green hill-side. The ballads had been chanted by mothers in shepherds' shielings, which nestled, far away from towns, down by the burnsides in the solitary glens; chanted chiefly of a winter evening, at the foresupper time, when the glow of the peat-fire cast flickering shadows on the walls of the quiet room. But these strains were as yet unknown to the world; the muse of the Borders kept court only amid the wild recesses of Liddesdale, the green holms of Yarrow, and the pathetic solitudes of Ettrick. In their native shape, as oral traditions, many of those ballads influenced the sympathetic youth of Leyden and Hogg. But it was reserved for Scott to gather them together, to make them known to the world, to have the spirit of them thoroughly infused into his own being; and, catching up the old refrain, to make it far more glorious than it was before, pouring the fresh spirit of old romance into modern British poetry and fiction. Well might the Mountain Spirit of his native land thus address him:—

"Decay'd our old traditionary lore,
Save where the lingering fays renew their rings,
By milk-maid seen beneath the hawthorn hoar,
Or round the marge of Minchmore's haunted spring;

Save where their legends grey-hair'd shepherds sing,
That now scarce win a listening ear but thine,
Of feuds obscure, and Border ravaging,
And rugged deeds recount in rugged line,
Of moonlit foray made on Teviot, Tweed, or Tyne."

The traditions connected with Thomas the Rhymour, his weird communings with Fairy and Fairyland, and his mysterious fate, seem to have been among the first to fire the fancy of Scott, and we have accordingly in the *Minstrelsy* two new ballads on the prophet of Erceldoune. It was indeed the dim figure of the Rhymour, seen through the mists of five hundred years, which quickened Scott's deepest interest in the romantic poetry of that early time, and led him to vivify and continue it in the nineteenth century.

There is something very picturesque in the quaint forms of mist that pass up the Border glens and wreathe the wavy hill-tops, something fine and mysterious in their delicate cloudy folds. But let the sun strike even dimly through them, and they become glorious with a new splendour. Scott found the dim floating picturesque legends and songs of the Border Land as mists retreating from the glens and hills. The power of his genius penetrated and transfigured them with a sun-like radiancy, and displayed them to the gaze of the world an imperishable object of delight.

These Ballads of action—their motion, vividness, intensity of realism—nourished what was strongest in Scott, the historical imagination, that power by which a man can put him-

self back into the past, live in it, reproduce it with all the power of real presence; and further raise out of this past ideal creations in harmony with it, at once symmetrical, characteristic, and complete. Few men have possessed this power in a degree equal to Scott, and fewer still have possessed it as he did, so as to be able to fuse the real and the ideal with so much truthfulness to the life of the time. And what has the historical imagination of Scott not done for us? At first locally fired, it soon became national, imperial :—

> "For thou upon a hundred streams,
> By tales of love and sorrow,
> Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
> Hast shed the power of Yarrow."

What interesting portion of Scottish history has this outspreading power not reanimated? Reanimated, too, in its principal features of historic truth, and yet with enhanced dramatic interest? It has snatched from oblivion a large portion of its domain, brought living forms from the ashes of forgotten graves, made Scotland conscious of the past, conscious, in a word, of herself, in her heritage alike of glory and of shame.

What, it may be asked, did Scott add to these old strains of Border life out of which his poetry grew? The first characteristic difference, as appears to me, between the older minstrel and the modern, particularly Scott, arises from the circumstance of distance in time from the events narrated.

The older minstrel, living among the events or near the time of them, treated them as realities; Scott, living in a subsequent age, when they had passed away, was at liberty to treat them as ideals of the memory and imagination. Now the action is remote, and the personal interest of the narrator is subordinate to his artistic interest. The older minstrel had no time or liking for rhetoric—he was too much in earnest—the modern poet can note all the surroundings of scenery, the equipment of knight, in coat of mail, in helm, plume, and lance, a living and moving figure. The latter obviously has not lived in the scene he pictures. It never actually fired his blood. If it makes his pulses throb, it is only the imaginative emotion which springs from that

> "keener rush of blood
> That throbs through bard in bardlike mood."

Hence, too, the modern poet is freer in the creation of plot and incident, more varied in turn of story, less tied down to a single action, than the older minstrel; for the latter spoke of what had occurred, or of what he believed had occurred, at a definite time, often in his own day, or as a part of a life of which his own day might readily furnish an example. There was a conscientious truthfulness of adherence to the single action or incident, swayed only now and again by a patriotic desire to make the best of the story for his own clan or nationality. Complexity of action or converging lines of narrative were wholly unknown to his art.

Hence, too, we have in Scott the scenery of the incident —whether soft, gentle, and beautiful nature, or grand, terrible, and sublime nature—freely, purely, unconventionally pictured. We have the time of the day—the very hour, be it morn, or noon, or night—distinctively painted. Nothing is wanting to complete the feeling of realism. We have colour, form, aspect of the object, as the actor might have seen them, and as we are permitted leisurely to contemplate them.

Along with the historical imagination, we find Scott characterised by an intense love of free nature—untouched, uncultured nature—the heathery hill and the bracken glen, fair as these have come from the hand of God. In fact, the modern feeling for nature first realised its fullest development in Walter Scott. And the element of description of natural features, which in the older minstrels was a subordinate one, became with Scott a principal part of poetic art. This love was with him a passion—one of the deepest in his heart. He rejoiced in boon nature, that

> "Scattered, free and wild,
> Each plant and flower the mountain child."

> "On the wild hill
> Let the wild heathbell flourish still;
> Cherish the tulip, prune the vine;
> But freely let the woodbine twine,
> And leave untrimmed the eglantine."

Early in this century Washington Irving came across the

Atlantic to see, among other people, the author of *The Lay of The Last Minstrel.* Scott and he walked to the top of the hills above Abbotsford, and Scott pointed out to Irving the statuesque hill lines of his beloved Border Land. Irving, familiar with the vast expanses and the great woods of America, showed little feeling for the scene. Scott indeed thought him dull and disappointed, and was a little hurt through the apparent lack of sympathy. At length, in answer to a remark of Irving's, the poet said to him: "I like the very nakedness of the land; it has something bold, and stern, and solitary about it. When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh, which is like ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back among my own honest grey hills; and if I did not see the heather once a year I think I should die." In these words, spoken with emotion, Scott revealed his soul, the relation of his heart to nature. And the words meant the casting away of the trammels of conventional order and restraint in dealing with outward nature, which had lain as a nightmare on British poetry, ever since it had been subjected to the traditions of the so-called classical and mediæval habit. The true spirit of moor and mountain liberty inspired the utterance; and the same spirit made him bold to paint with truth, purity, and power what lay around him, and what only required the courage of faithful delineation to raise to universal poetry. This love was wide as it was intense. It embraced nature both in its gentler and in its grander aspects. The feeling for free,

pure, gentle nature was quickened and daily nourished in him by the scenery around him, by the green haughs, the soft hill-sides, the sunny gleam, and the picturesque flow of waters in the vales of Tweed and Yarrow. The solitudes of Liddesdale, the wild uplands of Teviot, and dark Loch Skene helped to nourish the sterner love; and we must add to these the grander scenes of his wanderings amid—

"The northern realms of ancient Caledon,
Where the proud Queen of Wilderness hath placed
By Lake and Cataract her lonely throne;
* * * * *
Listing where from the cliffs the torrents thrown
Mingle their echoes with the eagle's cry,
And with the sounding lake, and with the moaning sky.

Such are the scenes, where savage grandeur wakes
An awful thrill that softens into sighs;
Such feelings rouse them by dim Rannoch's lakes,
In dark Glencoe such gloomy raptures rise:
Or, farther, where, beneath the northern skies,
Chides wild Loch-Eribol his caverns hoar—
But, be the minstrel judge, they yield the prize
Of desert dignity to that dread shore,
That sees grim Coolin rise, and hears Coriskin roar."

The root-feeling in Scott's relation to outward nature is one of complete realism. He looks upon it as a thing wholly independent of himself and his passing moods of mind—it is, for him, absolutely impersonal. As such, it is an abiding transcendent power—stronger, greater, more enduring than himself, before which he bows, and whose

features, mild and stern, it is his moral and artistic duty faithfully to portray. His feeling for the grander side of nature is a reverential worship—for the gentle side almost a feminine love.

Closely connected with the feeling for free nature in Scott, is his wonderful sense of locality and faculty of imbuing places with the magic power of suggestion. In this he differs mainly from Wordsworth, and resembles Milton. Wordsworth's love of the outward world was enhanced and nourished by the subtle moral and spiritual symbolism which his soul found there; Scott inwove with this love the history of the past, story and legend, until places and natural objects thrill the heart with a wholly new power. Out of the wealth of association stored in his capacious memory, he has instinctively chosen epithet or allusion with singular fitness, and thus raised town or tower, muir, hill, vale, or stream into an ideal sphere, yet so vividly that it is more real to the imagination than to the senses. Scott has read the language of locality as it was never read before; he has translated the present into the past, so that the past lives in it with more power for us than any experience we can have of it will ever counterbalance. This element is one constantly recurring in his narrative and descriptive passages, and cannot be separated from them in an estimate of their impressiveness.

And we observe the same breaking away from the classical spirit in Scott's relation to place as to natural features. While

this spirit, as manifested in English poetry before his time, liked the strong, massive, and regular, and was entirely deficient in sympathy with ruin and decay, Scott delighted in the broken, the irregular, the ruined. The very stones of a mouldering tower were dear to his heart, for with them were fused the picturesqueness of the present and the spirit of the old; and the green mound or shapeless cairn was his pathetic joy, because it held the buried past.

There is one point worthy of note in this connection, not perhaps at first readily discernible. When the wondrous picturing of localities is presented to us by Scott, we have nearly universally the contrast of rapid movement. Place after place comes up before the eye of the mind in quiet succession, yet never so as to bewilder, and each is pictured as it appears to a rider as he sweeps across country, or perhaps to one in a passing ship as it

> "skirts the strand
> Of mountainous Northumberland."

In this there is a subtle suggestion of the contrast between rest and motion, between the dead history of the past—dead only to the sense, living and quickening in the soul—and the life of the present. William of Deloraine rode from Branksome to Melrose, and the soul of the poet himself was looking from under the barred visor of the moss-trooper. The memories and the awe of the past overshadowed the horseman all through that night ride till dawn. The repose

of the places around him, with their silent memories, stirred and quickened the rider on his way:—

"Soon in his saddle sat he fast,
And soon the steep descent he passed,
Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,
And soon the Teviot side he wan.
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod;
He passed the Peel of Goldieland,
And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand;
Dimly he viewed the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round;
In Hawick twinkled many a light;
Behind him soon they set in night;
And soon he spurred his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

* * * * * *

A moment now he slack'd his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed;
Drew saddle-girth and corslet band,
And loosen'd in the sheath his brand,
On Minto crags the moon-beams glint,
Where Barnhill hewed his bed of flint;
Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest.

* * * * * *

Unchalleng'd then pass'd Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road."

Of Scott's pictorial power as applied directly to the scenes of the Border district, we have the best examples in the Introductions to the Cantos of *Marmion* (1808). He has done nothing truer or finer in the way of description than in the sketches there given. We have a picture of Tweedside in November (Introduction, Canto I.), and of the same and of Yarrow in Introductions to Canto IV. and Canto V. In that to Canto II. we have a picture of Ettrick Forest as it was; a description of St Mary's Loch in calm, and then in storm from the Wizard's Grave. "Dark Loch Skene" is sketched in the same Introduction. In that to Canto III. we have a picture of Sandyknowe and Smailholm Tower, of his early life there, and the educating influences of the time and scene. A sketch of the Border shepherd's life in winter, and of a snow-storm on the hill, is given in the Introduction to Canto IV. In that to Canto V. we have a picture of December on the Tweed. These sketches are too familiar to need quotation. But one may be given, which is the most perfect of the whole, the description of St. Mary's Loch in calm:—

> "Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
> By lone St. Mary's silent lake;
> Thou know'st it well—nor fen nor sedge
> Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge;
> Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
> At once upon the level brink;
> And just a trace of silver sand
> Marks where the water meets the land.

Far in the mirror, bright and blue
Each hill's huge outline you may view;
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake is there,
Save where, of land, yon slender line
Bears thwart the lake the scatter'd pine.
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour:
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy
Where living thing concealed might lie;
Nor point, retiring, hides a dell
Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell;
There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness:
And silence aids—though the steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills;
In summer tide, so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude."

This is an exact transcript of the scene; and it is the pure reproduction of the feeling which the scene engenders. It is the eye speaking to the heart. The expression, too, is faultless. There is not a word or phrase in the lines which is inconsistent with simple yet perfect art. I do not think the same can be said of his description of Loch Skene, in which, amid many true lines, there crops up an occasional exaggeration.

The winter scenes are the least good. In these Scott fixes on the harsh features and the inconveniences of the winter day, its chill and its "weary waste of snows":—

"When dark December glooms the day,
And takes our autumn joys away;
When short and scant the sunbeam throws,
Upon the weary waste of snows,
A cold and profitless regard,
Like patron on a needy bard.
* * * * * *
When from our snow-encircled home,
Scarce cares the hardiest step to roam,
Since path is none, save that to bring
The needful water from the spring.
* * * * * *
And answering house-wife sore complains
Of carriers' snow-impeded wains."*

Scott uses the winter scene simply as a foil to enhance the pleasures of a retreat from the country to city life. In this respect, he had not advanced beyond the shivering feeling for winter familiar to Scottish poetry all through the previous centuries. Sensation dominates over sentiment in Scott, as it did in Gawain Douglas in the picture of winter. Scott here manifests a limit to his sympathy, usually very strong, for power and grandeur. He shows no true feeling either for the power of winter storm, the beauty of its snow-fall, the pure glory of the white spreading landscape, or the purple gleam on the snow-capped hill—aspects of nature with which he must have been familiar, even in early winter, on Tweedside.

Notwithstanding this limitation to the range of his sympathy, Scott stands out a master of pictorial and de-

* Introduction to Canto V. Compare Introduction to Canto IV.

scriptive art, as applied to the outward world. His scenes have a unity of character; and they succeed in making a single grand impression. For sense of stillness, about to be broken, what, for example, can be finer than this of Loch Achray?—

"Where shall he find in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!
There is no breeze upon the fern,
No ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyry nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lie still,
So darkly glooms yon thundercloud
That swathes as with a purple shroud
Ben-Ledi's distant hill."

His pictures are, as a consequence or condition of their unity, free from the admixture of incongruous or jarring features; they are thoroughly true to what eye and ear see and hear in the special circumstances; and they are courageously faithful to the Scottish landscape. The old conventionalism of epithet, borrowed from continental or English sources, has thoroughly disappeared. The reality of our scenery is given to us as it was never given by Scottish poet before.

Scott's marvellous descriptive power reminds one of that Abbey by the Tweed which he loved so well—fair Melrose—not as it now is in its broken picturesqueness as a ruin, but as it was ere a brutal soldiery struck it—when it stood in the

beauty of its varied proportions and the consenting symmetry of its parts. It is a fair picture in stone in the haugh of the gleaming river, fair as a whole which eye can conceive or heart yearn towards. Enter it and your admiration is enhanced by the perfection and minuteness of individual ornament, by the truth, naturalness, and freshness of fern and heath, of leaf and flower, portrayed on the living stone. So it is with each of Scott's grander scenes—his picture of Loch Katrine, of St. Mary's Loch in calm, of Edinburgh, of Flodden Field. You feel the power of each as a noble whole, as you would have felt the power of the exterior of that Abbey—that poem in stone by the Tweed. Analyse each, enter into it, note the details, as you might do of the tracings on arch and pillar, and you will be not less charmed by the delicate beauty, the weird touch, the life-like look of minutest feature. And why? Because Scott worked in his art with a spirit as faithful to the nature he saw, as did the mediæval artist, when, in the devotion of his soul, he concentred the wealth of his imagination and his wondrous reproduction of living forms, in the Temple of God by the moving river, and taught us, what we are very slow in learning, that truthfulness in art is itself reverence for the divine, and our means of approach to the consciousness of the thoughts of God embodied in the things around us.

It is a matter of interest for us to inquire how the genius of Scott, in relation to the feeling for nature, acquired its peculiar bent. His historical imagination was clearly stimu-

lated and nourished by the old Ballads of action, by legend, and story. But the *Minstrelsy* does not afford quite the same amount of stimulus to the feeling for nature. As we have seen, the references to aspects of the outward world are chiefly indirect, and they are limited in range. But not the less was Scott indebted to local and ancestral conditions for the growth and nourishment of his strong and peculiar feeling for the scenes around him. That certain qualities of character are hereditary, that they may be transmitted from sire to son through a series of generations, and that they may acquire volume and intensity with the descent, will hardly be disputed. Scott's feeling for the aspect of Border scenery may be taken as an instance of a quality of mind transmitted from foregoing times, the residuary result of the experience of his forefathers. His father, indeed, was one of the least romantic and most prosaic of men. As a factor on estates, his pleasure was to pull down old towers and ancient kirks to build farmsteadings and cow-byres. But the circumstances of life may hinder the proper outgoing of latent sensibility, or qualities may overleap a generation. And Scott's mother was of finer mould—a Rutherford and a Borderer. His forebears, on the mother's side, were for a hundred years successively ministers of Yarrow, some of them apparently of more than average intelligence; and those on his father's side had been nothing more or less than a line of Border sheep-farmers, remotely small lairds attending to sheep when not

engaged in reiving. His ancestors on both sides had lived a lonely life among the hills for many generations. By their very loneliness and the requirements of their shepherd life, engendering individualism and force of character, they were led to watch the varying aspects of outward nature and to commune with it. Who notes the face of heaven so carefully and with so much interest as the shepherd up in the Border glens, and who knows its varying aspects so well? These men were daily familiar with the look of haugh, hillside, and sky; with the first green shoots of spring, with the heather-bloom on the moors, with the autumn "bent sae brown," with the wild and "waesome" winds of winter. They had noted these varying aspects of nature, and they embodied their experience in expressions at once characteristic, truthful, and full of poetic feeling. These phrases were abstractions, they were handed down traditionally, but daily experience of the feature noted made them living for each successive generation. At early morn they were familiar with what they called *the sky*, or breaking light which heralds the sunrise; the dawn itself they knew in all its forms of radiant glare, and gloomy splendour of light and cloud, when "the red sun is on the rain." They eyed carefully the *weather-gaw*, or broken bit of rainbow above the horizon, which betokened broken weather; and they applied the same expression to denote a day of an unusually fine character, interposed, as out of season, amid other darker days. When the clouds rose high before the wind, and swept across the heavens, they spoke of

the *carry* of the clouds, and the *rack* of the sky. When the vapour showed thin before the sun and over the face of the *lift*, they recognised the *skaum* or darkening of the sky. Then, again, when the sun struck through the mist that rose from the earth, and made it glorious, they spoke of the *dry ure*. And towards evening, when the westering sun shoots slantingly down the glens, and the broad-browed, deep-bosomed, forest hills lie grandly self-shadowed—for objects in general cast their shadows on other objects, the hills on themselves—they knew the *scarrow of the hill*. When the long twilight of an evening came, they rejoiced in that sweetest of poetic times and words, *the gloamin'*—with all its myriad associations of rest, and soothing, and peace—when the face of nature becomes gentle, and the old man of toil has his quiet hour, and in the hearts of the younger people there arise musings, perhaps, of a tender feeling, and dreams of peace in "a biggin' of their ain" at some not remote future. And then, when the gloamin' was nearly over, and the *mirk* was coming rapidly on, they noted the clear yet mysterious belt of light that runs along the flowing lines of the tops of our wavy hills, with the dark cloud of heaven above, and the dark mass of earth below, and this they named *the weather-gleam*—that umbered light in which day and night seem to meet and to be reconciled in one. All these aspects of nature they knew, felt, and noted, and embodied in characteristic phrases. Many of these men were unconscious, undeveloped poets. Some of them even found utterance for

what was in their hearts in plaintive song. How could it be otherwise? They moved in an atmosphere of pure pathos; they felt it in the tremulous shadows which in a summer day mottle the pastoral green; in the sough of the innumerable burns; in the wide solitude of the moorlands, broken only by the pleading voices of the bleating lambs, the plaintive note of the whaup, or the half-wail, half-wile, of the peesweep's cry. Walter Scott, and James Hogg too, both came from a sheep-farming ancestry. Scott laid claim to gentle blood, and prided himself more on this than he needed to do. And I am not sure but that James Hogg had, in point of fact, as good a claim as he, though his immediate ancestors had fallen lower socially than those of Scott. I say *socially*, for no man falls low who does not fall below right-doing. With the circumstances of their forefathers in view, we may take both Scott and Hogg as examples and proof of the physiological and psychological law, not as yet precisely formulated, and subject to many conditions of interference, in virtue of which qualities grow through the accumulated experience of successive generations, until, as with the root in the earth after a long winter, there bursts forth a large complex growth, apparently spontaneous, and beautiful as the crowning and consummate flower of spring. In them the long maturing imaginative faculty that had been silently and unconsciously nourished in their forest ancestors, through summer shine and winter storm, on hillside and by burn, and in lonely glens, bloomed and expanded into the glorious

flower of a genius that loved and sung Scottish nature as it never had been loved or sung before.

Yarrow Unvisited, 1803, *Yarrow Visited*, 1814, *Yarrow Revisited*, 1831—these are unspeakably precious possessions. The first of them means the power of the ideal over the human heart, the power of the past and the distant gathered into a unity of present impression. The ideal unvisited Yarrow of Wordsworth was one of the truest realities of his life, his life of thought and his life of action. Such was his reverence for the unseen river, that he feared to see it, because,

> "Unwilling to surrender
> Dreams treasured up from early days,
> The holy and the tender."

He feared lest the actual might dissolve the glorious thrall of the life-long vision which held him:—

> "Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown,
> It must, or we shall rue it;
> We have a vision of our own,
> Ah! why should we undo it?
>
> The treasured dreams of times long past
> We'll keep them, winsome Marrow;
> For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
> 'Twill be another Yarrow."

We know this feeling well. There is no greater risk in all our experience than that of confronting our ideal with the

real, and no more trying experience than feeling the crash of the ideal vision through contact with the unfeeling reality.

But at length the poet saw the stream. Eleven years afterwards we have *Yarrow Visited.* And we have there the real, the true Yarrow, the truest Yarrow that ever was pictured; real, yet not literal—Yarrow as it is for the spiritual sense, made keen, quick, sensitive, and deep through the brooding over the stories of the years and living communion with the heart of things:—

"And is this—Yarrow? This the stream
Of which my fancy cherish'd
So faithfully a waking dream,
An image that hath perished?

O that some minstrel's harp were near
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why? a silvery current flows
With uncontroll'd meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed in all my wanderings.

And, through her depths, Saint Mary's lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender, hazy brightness;

Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon sweet mound
On which the herd is feeding:

And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The water-wraith ascended thrice,
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the lay that sings
The haunts of happy lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:

And pity sanctifies the verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou that didst appear so fair,
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:

Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,

With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated Nature;

And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a ruin hoary,
The shatter'd front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength,
And age to wear away in!

Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of studious ease and generous cares,
And every chaste affection!

How sweet on this autumnal day
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my true-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!

And what if I enwreathed my own?
'Twere no offence to reason;
The sober hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee—
A ray of Fancy still survives—
Her sunshine plays upon thee!

Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
Sad thought! which I would banish,

But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

Eighteen years afterwards, the writer of these lines revisited the vale of Yarrow with Walter Scott—immediately before his departure from Abbotsford to Naples, that last hopeless journey—as the trouble came—

"A trouble not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light,
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height;
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight."

The Autumn leaves were fittingly sere on the birches, or they were falling:—

"But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed—
The forest to embolden;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden."

Thoughts of the past naturally arose, mixed with forebodings about the future—"the morn of youth," "life's temperate noon," "her sober eve," "her night not melancholy;" and, amid it all—

"Yarrow, through the woods,
And down the meadows ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing."

In 1803, the year of *Yarrow Unvisited*, Wordsworth passed by Neidpath Castle on the Tweed. The surroundings of the ancient and massive keep had then quite recently been the scene of a piece of pitiful havoc, on the part of its worthless owner, seldom matched for evil motive and unsparing destruction. To spite his heir chiefly, the last Douglas of Queensberry of his line, ordered the cutting down of the old forest trees that had grown up through the centuries, and long before he or his two predecessors owned an acre of the property. This was carried out, and the steep sides of the picturesque gorge of the Tweed, through which the river in the far past had worked its way against opposing rock, were left defaced and bare; and the whole demesne "beggar'd and outraged." This fired the heart of the poet, and he has given expression to his feelings in these lines:—

"Degenerate Douglas! O the unworthy lord!
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please
And love of havoc (for with such disease
Fame taxes him) that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horde,
A brotherhood of venerable trees,
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these
Beggar'd and outraged! Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old trees; and oft with pain

The traveller at this day will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed:
For shelter'd places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain."

There are still a few names in recent times of men in whom the spirit of Border song issued in utterances which may well be cherished by us. I may mention especially William Laidlaw, Thomas Pringle, James Nicol, Thomas Smibert, Andrew Scott, Allan Cunningham, Henry Scott Riddell, and, but lately taken from us, the youthful preacher and poet, Thomas Davidson.

Lucy's Flittin' is the lyric of the Borders which ranks next to *The Flowers of the Forest.* It was the production of William Laidlaw, the son of the farmer of Blackhouse on the Douglas Burn, the early friend of Hogg, and the life-long friend and amanuensis of Walter Scott. He was born in 1780, and he died in 1845. *Lucy's Flittin'* could have been written only by one who had been brought up among the south country glens: who knew and felt the simplicity of rural life and manners there, and who, as a man of true lyrical soul, could for the time entirely forget himself, realise the feelings and speak the language of the breaking-hearted country lassie:—

"'Twas when the wan leaf frae the birk tree was fa'in',
And Martinmas dowie had wound up the year,

That Lucy row'd up her wee kist wi' her a' in't,
And left her auld maister and neebours sae dear;

For Lucy had served in The Glen a' the simmer;
She cam there afore the flower bloomed on the pea,
An orphan was she, and they had been kind till her,
Sure that was the thing brocht the tear to her e'e.

She gaed by the stable where Jamie was stanin';
Richt sair was his kind heart the flittin' to see;
Fare ye weel, Lucy, quo Jamie, and ran in;
The gatherin' tears trickled fast frae his e'e.

As down the burn-side she gaed slow wi' the flittin'
Fare ye weel, Lucy! was ilka bird's sang;
She heard the crow sayin't high on the tree sittin',
And robin was chirpin't the brown leaves amang.

Oh, what is't that pits my puir heart in a flutter?
And what gars the tears come sae fast to my e'e?
If I wasna ettled to be ony better,
Then what gars me wish ony better to be?

I'm just like a lammie that loses its mither;
Nae mither or friend the puir lammie can see;
I fear I hae tint my puir heart a' thegither,
Nae wonder the tears fa' sae fast fra my e'e.

Wi' the rest of my claes I hae row'd up the ribbon,
The bonnie blue ribbon that Jamie ga'e me;
Yestreen, when he ga'e me't, and saw I was sabbin',
I'll never forget the wae blink o' his e'e.

Though now he said naething but fare ye weel, Lucy!
It made me I neither could speak, hear, nor see;
He could na say mair but just, fare ye weel, Lucy!
Yet that I will mind till the day that I dee.

[The lamb likes the gowan wi' dew when it's droukit;
The hare likes the brake and the braird on the lea;
But Lucy likes Jamie—she turned and she lookit,
She thocht the dear place she wad never mair see.

Ah weel may young Jamie gang dowie and cheerless!
And weel may he greet on the bank of the burn!
For bonnie sweet Lucy, sae gentle and peerless,
Lies cauld in her grave and will never return!"]*

This, like Miss Elliot's version of *The Flowers of the Forest*, is a true inspiration of the locality. Its images are drawn from the familiar features of the place; and they express a form of feeling as intense as it is real and natural in the homely life of the persons concerned. Both lyrics may also be said to be the single flowering of the genius of the writers. Laidlaw's other songs, *On the Banks of the Burn*, and *Alake for the Lassie*, are inferior to the one by which he made his name. Simply and naturally as *Lucy's Flittin'* flows, it was, as I have good reason to know, the result of elaborate effort on the part of the writer.

Thomas Pringle (born at Blacklaw in Teviotdale, 1789—died in London in 1834), had in the course of his changeful life to emigrate to South Africa in 1820, where, as at home, he was unfortunate. When leaving the shores of Scotland, and the vales of the Teviot and the Tweed, his heart-feeling found utterance thus:—

* These last eight lines are by Hogg.

"Our native land—our native vale—
A long and last adieu!
Farewell to bonny Teviotdale,
And Cheviot mountains blue.

Farewell, ye hills of glorious deeds,
And streams renown'd in song—
Farewell ye braes and blossom'd meads,
Our hearts have loved so long.

Farewell the blythesome broomy knowes,
Where thyme and harebells grow—
Farewell, the hoary, haunted howes,
O'erhung with birk and sloe.

The mossy cave and mouldering tower
That skirt our native dell—
The martyr's grave and lover's bower,
We bid a sad farewell!

Home of our love! our fathers' home!
Land of the brave and free!
The sail is flapping on the foam
That bears us far from thee!

We seek a wild and distant shore,
Beyond the western main—
We leave thee to return no more,
Nor view thy cliffs again!

But may dishonour blight our fame,
And blast our household fires,
If we or ours forget thy name,
Green island of our sires!

Our native land—our native vale—
A long and last adieu!
Farewell to bonny Teviotdale,
And Scotland's mountains blue!"

Pringle caught up the two stanzas which Lady Grizzel Baillie left,* and thus completed *The Ewe Buchtin's Bonnie*:—

" O the ewe-bughtin's bonnie, baith e'enin' and morn,
When our blythe shepherds play on the bog-reed and horn;
While we're milkin', they're liltin' baith pleasant and clear;
But my heart's like to break when I think on my dear;

O the shepherds take pleasure to blow on the horn,
To raise up their flock o' sheep soon i' the morn;
On the bonnie green banks they feed pleasant and free,
But alas! my dear heart, all my sighin's for thee!

O the sheep herdin's lightsome amang the green braes,
Where Kale wimples clear 'neath the white-blossomed slaes,
Where the wild-thyme and meadow-queen scent the soft gale,
And the cushat croods luesomely down in the dale.

There the lintwhite and mavis sing sweet frae the thorn,
And blythe lilts the laverock aboon the green corn,
And a' things rejoice in the simmer's glad prime—
But my heart's wi' my love in the far foreign clime!

O the hay-makin's pleasant in bright sunny June—
The hay-time is cheery when hearts are in tune;
But while others are jokin' and laughin' sae free,
There's a pang at my heart and a tear in my e'e.

At e'en i' the gloamin' adown by the burn,
Fu' dowie and wae, oft I daunder and mourn;
Amang the lang broom I sit greetin' alane,
And sigh for my dear and the days that are gane.

O the days o' our youth-heid were heartsome and gay,
When we herded thegither by sweet Gaitshaw brae,

* See *supra*, p. 438.

When we plaited the rushes and pu'd the witch-bells
By the Kale's ferny houms and on Hounam's green fells.

But young Sandy bood* gang to the wars wi' the laird,
To win honour and gowd (gif his life it be spared),
Ah! little care I for wealth, favour or fame,
Gin I had my dear shepherd but safely at hame!

Then round our wee cot though gruff winter should roar,
And poortith glower in like a wolf at the door:
Though our toom purse had barely twa boddles to clink,
And a barley meal scone were the best on our bink;

Yet he wi' his hirsel, and I wi' my wheel,
Through the howe o' the year we wad fen' unco weel;
Till the lintwhite and laverock and lambs bleatin' fain,
Brought back the blythe time o' ewe-bughtin' again."

The Rev. James Nicol, minister of Traquair, born at Innerleithen in 1793, died in 1819, is the author of several songs, distinguished some by humour—not over-refined—and others by pathos. *Halucket Meg* belongs to the former class; *Where Quair Rins Sweet Amang the Flowers* to the latter. The song has some fine stanzas. Thus:—

"Where Quair rins sweet amang the flowers,
Down by yon woody glen, lassie,
My cottage stands—it shall be yours,
Gin ye will be my ain, lassie.

I'll watch ye wi' a lover's care,
And wi' a lover's e'e, lassie;
I'll weary heaven wi' mony a prayer,
And ilka prayer for thee, lassie.

* Felt bound.

'Tis true I hae na mickle gear;
My stock is unco sma', lassie;
Nae fine spun foreign claes I wear,
Nor servants tend my ca', lassie.

But had I heir'd the British crown,
And thou o' low degree, lassie;
A rustic lad I wad hae grown,
Or shared that crown wi' thee, lassie.

* * * * * *

I blame the blast blaws on thy cheek;
The flower that decks thy hair, lassie;
The gales that steal thy breath sae sweet,
My love and envy share, lassie.

* * * * * *

Where Quair rins sweet amang the flowers,
Down by yon woody glen, lassie;
I have a cot, it shall be yours,
Gin you will be my ain, lassie."

Thomas Smibert was born in Peebles in 1810. He studied medicine, was a surgeon by profession, but betook himself early in life to literature. He lived chiefly in Edinburgh, and he died there in 1854. Some years before his death, he published a volume of poems entitled *Io Anche! Poems chiefly Lyrical*—(1851). Smibert rises to fine and true inspiration wherever he touches his own life experience and the scenes of his early days. Those who know the circumstances of his early life, when he was apprentice to a surgeon, will recognise the allusion in the

following verses, and even the road which he was in the habit of travelling of a night, with the dark shadows of the hills on the one side, and on the other the gleam of the Tweed, along his way:—

"I love the sacred, silent hours,
That link the palms of Night and Day,
Wedding the coy reluctant powers
In bands of silver grey.

I love them, though too oft they shake
Oblivion from its proper throne,
And bid the restless soul awake,
And the dear sleep begone.

* * * * * *

Still this grey season hath for me
A charm of deeper feelings born;
With bright peculiar thoughts I see
The rising star of morn.

The draught of bliss that morning sips
Is vast as ocean in its pool;
The cup ordained for mortal lips,
Though small, may be as full.

And of the joys for man designed,
A bounteous store fell then on me;
And, far as suiteth with our kind,
I shared the day dawn glee.

And why was thus my bosom light?
And wherefore were my spirits gay,
As on I roamed alone by night,
Upon a lonely way?

Love was the power that led me on—
Love was the lamp that lit my path;
Love made long miles seem light as none,
By mount, and moor, and strath.

O! fair was she to whom I gave
The first love of my fervent years—
A love not springing from a grave—
No growth of widowed tears!

O! she was fair! Those dark bright eyes,
The veined marble of that brow,
That cheek of rarely blended dyes—
Methinks I view them now!

Still fondly doth Remembrance hold
By those dear times which saw me rove
By night across the lonesome wold
To taste one hour of Love!

The closing eve beheld me go;
The dawn saluted my return;
But why begin these tears to flow!
Poor heart, why idly mourn?

If she be happy, be thou glad,
Nor vainly what is past deplore;
And yet, how may I be but sad,
Since I can love no more!

O! rightly have the poets sung,
That when Love's vernal bloom hath flown,
No more, where once it freshly sprung,
Can the fair flower be known!

* * * * * *

It is not that my hair is grey,
  Nor that my blood is thin and cold;
Few seasons, since young Passion's day,
  Above my head have rolled.

* * * * * *

The cup was full, brimful of bliss,
  Which it was mine erewhile to drain;
I loved—was loved; the end is this—
  I cannot love again!"

But the best poem which Smibert has written is a lyric entitled *The Scottish Widow's Lament.* It is one of the truest and most pathetic pictures of that simple life of joy and sorrow, with which we may meet any day in the Tweedside glens. How sweetly does quiet domestic happiness nestle in those shepherd cottages that are hidden in the recesses of the hills far up among the burns! And how peculiarly heavy and sharp is the stroke of sudden bereavement when there, away from human haunts, it falls on the wife and mother, and leaves her a solitary widow in the solitary glen! This touching theme is the subject of the following lyric, and it is as true and deep in feeling as it is fine in local allusion:—

"Afore the Lammas tide
  Had dun'd the birken tree,
In a' our water-side
  Nae wife was blest like me;
A kind gudeman, and twa
  Sweet bairns were round me here,

But they're a' ta'en awa'
Sin' the fa' o' the year.

Sair trouble cam our gate,
And made me, when it cam,
A bird without a mate,
A ewe without a lamb.
Our hay was yet to maw,
And our corn was to shear,
When they a' dwined awa'
In the fa' o' the year.

I downa look a-field,
For aye I trow I see
The form that was a bield
To my wee bairns and me;
But wind, and weet, and snaw,
They never mair can fear,
Sin' they a' got the ca'
In the fa' o' the year.

Aft on the hill at e'ens
I see him mang the ferns,
The lover o' my teens,
The father o' my bairns:
For there his plaid I saw
As gloamin' aye drew near—
But my a's now awa'
Sin' the fa' o' the year.

Our bonnie rigs theirsel',
Reca' my waes to mind,
Our puir dumb beasties tell
O' a' that I have tined;
For wha our wheat will saw,
And wha our sheep will shear,
Sin' my a' gaed awa'
In the fa' o' the year?

My hearth is growing cauld,
  And will be caulder still;
And sair, sair in the fauld
  Will be the winter's chill;
For peats were yet to ca',
  Our sheep they were to smear.
When my a' passed awa'
  In the fa' o' the year.

I ettle whiles to spin,
  But wee, wee patterin' feet
Come rinnin' out and in,
  And then I just maun greet:
I ken it's fancy a',
  And faster rows the tear,
That my a' dwined awa'
  In the fa' o' the year.

Be kind, O Heaven abune!
  To ane sae wae and lane,
An' tak' her hamewards sune,
  In pity o' her maen;
Long ere the March winds blaw,
  May she, far far frae here,
Meet them a' that's awa'
  Sin' the fa' o' the year."

Andrew Scott was born at Bowden, close to the Eildons, as far back as 1757. He died in 1839 at the age of eighty-two, and is buried in Bowden Churchyard. He was of peasant extraction, and served as a soldier in the American war, after which he returned to spend the remainder of his days in his native district. His poetic inspiration was due mainly to the reading of Allan Ramsay.

His verses have a genuine flavour of the moorland, and they are simple as the rural life he portrays. Any time during the last fifty years we might have found on the Border uplands the prototype of the small farmer depicted in *Rural Content.* The class is not so numerous now-a-days, but fortunately we have still a few who exemplify the integrity and the homely virtues of the race :—

" I'm now a gude farmer, I've acres o' land,
An' my heart aye loups licht when I'm viewin o't,
An' I hae servants at my command,
An' twa daintie cowts for the plowin' o't.

My farm is a snug ane, lies high on a muir,
The muir-cocks and plivers aft skirl at my door,
An' when the sky lowers, I'm sure o' a show'r,
To moisten my land for the plowin' o't.

Leeze me on the mailin that's fa'n to my share,
It takes sax muckle bowes for the sawin' o't :
I've sax braid acres for pasture, an' mair,
An' a dainty bit bog for the mawin' o't.

A spence and a kitchen my mansion house gies,
I've a cantie wee wifie to daut whan I please ;
Twa bairnies, twa callans, that skelp ower the leas,
An' they'll soon can assist at the plowin' o't.

My biggin' stands sweet on this south slopin' hill,
An' the sun shines sae bonnily beamin' on't ;
An' past my door trots a clear prattlin' rill
Frae the loch, where the wild ducks are swimmin' on't.

An' on its green banks, on the gay simmer days,
My wifie trips barefit, a bleachin' her claes,

An' on the dear creature wi' rapture I gaze,
While I whistle and sing at the plowin' o't.

To rank among farmers I hae muckle pride,
But I maunna speak high when I'm tellin' o't,
How brawly I strut on my shelty to ride,
Wi' a sample to show for the sellin' o't.

In blue worset boots that my auld mither span
I've aft been fu' vantie sin' I was a man,
But now they're flung by, and I've bought cordovan,
And my wifie ne'er grudged me a shillin' o't.

* * * * * *

Now hairst-time is o'er, an' a fig for the laird,
My rent's now secure for the toilin' o't;
My fields are a' bare, and my crap's in th' yard,
And I'm nae mair in doubts o' the spoilin' o't.

Now welcome gude weather, or wind, or come weet,
Or bauld ragin' winter, wi' hail, snaw, or sleet,
Nae mair can he draigle my crap 'mang his feet,
Nor wraik his mischief, and be spoilin' o't.

An' on the douf days, when loud hurricanes blaw,
Fu' snug i' the spence I'll be viewin' o't,
And jink the rude blast in my rush theikit ha',
When fields are sealed up frae the plowin' o't.

My bonnie wee wifie, the bairnies, and me,
The peat-stack and turf-stack our Phoebus shall be,
Till day close the scoul o' its angry e'e,
And we'll rest in gude hopes o' the plowin' o't.

SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING.

An' when the year smiles, and the laverocks sing,
My man Jock and me shall be doin' o't.

He'll thrash, and I'll toil on the fields in the spring,
An' turn up the soil at the plowin' o't.

An' whan the wee flowerets begin there to blaw,
The laverock, the peasweep, and skirlin' pick-maw,
Shall hiss the bleak winter to Lapland awa',
Then we'll ply the blythe hours at the sawin' o't.

An' when the birds sing on the sweet simmer morn,
My new crap I'll keek at the growin' o't;
When hares niffer love 'mang the green brairdit corn,
An' dew-drops the tender blade showin' o't.

On my brick o' fallow my labours I'll ply,
An' view on their pasture my twa bonny kye,
Till hairst time again circle round us wi' joy,
Wi' the fruits o' the sawin' and plowin' o't."*

Allan Cunningham, born in 1785 at Blackwood in Dumfriesshire, died in London 1842, has given us, in his *Songs of Scotland* (1825), several lyrics due to Border inspiration. Our only regret is that he did not accurately distinguish the outflowings of his own wealth of genius from the older fragments of poetry which he found, and which he incorporated or transfused with his own. But in the following instance there can be little doubt that we have an original song, the subject being the fate of a brother minstrel of the olden time, no less a personage than "Rattling Willie." In *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*,† the old harper makes allusion to him as

* See *The Book of Scottish Songs*, Part x., p. 626. J. R., Edinburgh.—A most interesting and well edited collection of Scottish poetry.

† Canto iv., xxxiv., xxxv.

a minstrel still older than himself. Cunningham says of him that "he was a noted ballad-maker and brawler, and his sword-hand was dreaded as much as his bow-hand was admired."* He killed a brother minstrel, Robin of Rule Water, in a quarrel about the merits of their playing. The reference in the *Lay* is as follows:—

"He knew each ordinance and clause
Of Black Lord Archibald's battle laws,
In the old Douglas' day.
He brook'd not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
Or call his song untrue:
For this, when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
The bard of Reull he slew.
On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,
And tuneful hands were stained with blood;
Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
That dragg'd my master to his tomb;
How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
And wrung their hands for love of him,
Who died at Jedwood Air?"

Allan's ballad, an exceedingly fine one, is as follows:—

"Our Willie's away to Jeddart,
To dance on the rood-day,
A sharp sword by his side,
A fiddle to cheer the way.

* Allan Cunningham's *Songs of Scotland*, II., p. 337.

The joyous tharms o' his fiddle
  Rob Rool had handled rude,
And Willie left New Mill banks
  Red-wat wi' Robin's blude.

Our Willie's away to Jeddart—
  May ne'er the saints forbode
That ever sae merry a fellow
  Should gang sae black a road!
For Stobs and young Falnash,
  They followed him up and down—
In the links of Ousenam Water
  They found him sleeping soun'.

Now may the name of Elliot
  Be cursed frae firth to firth!
He has fettered the gude right hand
  That keepit the land in mirth;
That keepit the land in mirth,
  And charm'd maids' hearts frae dool;
And sair will they want him, Willie,
  When birks are bare at Yule.

The lasses of Ousenam Water
  Are rugging and riving their hair,
And a' for the sake of Willie—
  They'll hear his sangs nae mair.
Nae mair to his merrie fiddle
  Dance Teviot's maidens free:
My curses on their cunning,
  Wha gaured sweet Willie dee."

Burn's *Rattlin' Roarin' Willie* apparently refers to the same personage, but it has in it nothing of the traditional or historic, an element with which the Ayrshire bard had very little

sympathy. There is also in Herd's *Collection** a love song entitled *Ranting Roaring Willie.*

Henry Scott Riddell is the author of several well known lyrics, of a pastoral and strongly patriotic cast. He was born in 1798 at Sorbie in Dumfriesshire, the son of a shepherd, and himself a shepherd in his earlier years. He studied for the Church of Scotland, and was licensed as a preacher. The latter part of his life was spent at Teviothead, where he died in 1870. His songs breathe the inspiration of Lowland Scotland; and his *Dowie Dens of Yarrow* has caught a good deal of the older spirit of the place. The lyric is, on the whole, a fine one:—

"Oh, sisters, there are midnight dreams
That pass not with the morning,
Then ask not why my reason swims
In a brain so wildly burning.
And ask not why I fancy how
Yon wee bird sings wi' sorrow,
That bluid lies mingled with the dew,
In the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

My dream's wild light was not of night,
Nor of the dolefu' morning;
Thrice on the stream was seen the gleam
That seem'd his sprite returning:
For sword-girt men came down the glen
An hour before the morrow,
And pierced the heart aye true to mine,
In the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

* I., 285.

Oh, there are red red drops of dew
Upon the wild flower's blossom,
But they couldna cool my burning brow,
And shall not stain my bosom.
But from the clouds o' yon dark sky
A cold cold shroud I'll borrow,
And long and deep shall be my sleep
In the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

Let my form the bluid dyed floweret press
By the heart o' him that lo'ed me,
And I'll steal frae his lips a long long kiss
In the bower where aft he wooed me.
For my arms shall fold and my tresses shield
The form of my death-cold marrow,
When the breeze shall bring the raven's wing
O'er the dowie dens o' Yarrow.

The same influences of song and scenery worked in the breast of one who, too early, alas! for the maturing of his powers, was but recently taken away from us—I mean Thomas Davidson, preacher and poet, born 1838, died 1870. At the close of the summer of 1862, Davidson visited the Cheviots, where he had spent a portion of his early youth, and thus he wrote of them:—

"Once more, once more upon the hills!
No more the splendour quivering bright,
Which finger laid at summer height
Upon the lips of half the rills,
Pours on them, but the year's most mellow light.
Far through yon opening of the vale,
Upon the slopes of Teviotdale,
The green has ta'en a fainter tinge;
It is the time when flowers grow old,

And summer trims her mantle fringe
With stray threads of autumnal gold.

The west wind blows from Liddesdale;
And as I sit—between the springs
Of Bowmont and of Cayle—
To my half-listening ear it brings
All floating voices of the hill—
The hum of bees in heather bells,
And bleatings from the distant fells,
The curlew's whistle far and shrill,
And babblings of the restless rill
That hastes to leave its lone hill-side,
And hurries on to sleep in Till,
Or join the tremulous flow of Teviot's sunny tide.

* * * * * * *

Oh, western wind, so soft and low,
Long-lingering by furze and fern,
Rise! From thy wing the languor throw,
And by the marge of mountain tarn,
By rushy brook, and lonely cairn,
Thy thousand bugles take, and blow
A wilder music up the fells!
Thy whispered spells—
About my heart I feel them twined;
And all the landscape far around
'Neath their still strength lies thrall'd and bound;
The sluggard clouds, the loitering streams,
And all the hills are dreaming dreams,
And I, too, dream with them, O western wind!

This morn I thought to linger here
Till fall of evening and the dew—
To think some fresher thought perchance, or rear
Old hopes in forms and colours new;
Then homeward by the burn-side wend,
When over Cheviot, keen and clear,

The moon look'd down upon the land.
But sad sweet spots hath each lost year
As ruins have their crevice-flowers
That sprinkle beauty o'er decay;
And I've been sitting hours on hours,
While those old seasons hovering near
Beguiled me of to-day!

I said that they were faded out,
The lines that years in me have wrought.
Alas! there is no hand to smooth
Life's graven record from our brows;
Fate drives us from the fields of youth,
And no returning step allows.
Let me no more, then, with reverted eyes
Let me no more with covetous sighs,
Gaze at the light which on them lies.
But come, assail me without ruth,
Pains of the life that's still my own!
Crowd out of sight the time that's gone,
Come, living cares; and come, the hour's anxieties!"*

His touching lines, "And there will I be buried," speak the inner feeling of his heart, and show how deeply he was moved by the scenery of his youth :—

"Tell me not the good and wise
Care not where their dust reposes—
That to him in death who lies
Rocky beds are even as roses.

I've been happy above ground;
I can never be happy under
Out of gentle Teviot's sound—
Part us not, then, far asunder.

* See *The Life of a Scottish Probationer*, by James Brown, p. 77.

Lay me here where I may see
Teviot round his meadows flowing,
And around and over me
Winds and clouds for ever going." *

The far borne notes of Border song, like wandering echoes from the past, and the aspects of Border scenery, still touch the ear and the heart of men in our own time with a genuine inspiration. Thomas Tod Stoddart has shown how the enthusiasm of the angler can be fitly interwoven with the ardour of the poetic lover of Border hill-side, stream, and glen. In his *Musings on the Banks of Teviot* there are some good stanzas :—

"With thy windings, gentle Teviot !
Through life's summer I have travell'd—
Shared in all thy merry gambols,
All thy mazy course unravell'd.

Every pool I know and shallow,
Every circumstance of channel,
Every incident historic
Blent with old or modern annal,

Which, within thy famous valley,
Dealt a mercy or a sorrow—
Every song and every legend
Which has passed into its morrow.

* * * * * * *

Still with glowing virtues, Teviot !
Graces, joys, and forms of beauty,

* *Ibid.*, p. 264.

Fill the valley of thy holding—
Roll in dignity of duty!

Forward roll and link thy fortunes
With fair Tweed—thine elder sister!
Lyne and Leithen, Ettrick, Leader,
In their earlier turns have kissed her.

Welcome, more than all the others,
Thou, whose fulness of perfection
Finds a grateful recognition
In this symbol of affection!

So entwined, Tweed glides exultant
As a joyful burden bearing
All thy passionate confidings—
The rich lore of love and daring,

Which to ballad and romances
Oft uncouthly bard committed,
Guided by thy chime or plaining,
To the rhythm which best befitted."

Mr. Stoddart has given us a spirited lyric entitled, *Tweed and its Prospects:—*

"River of all rivers dearest
To the Scottish heart—to ours!
River without shade of rival,
Rolling crystals, nursing flowers.

Stirring up the soul of music,
Chanting, warbling, beating, chiming,
To the poet's ardent fancy,
Adept in the art of rhyming;

Marching onward through thy valley
With the bearing of a king,

From the hundred hills surrounding
All thy vassals summoning!

Of our Rivers still the glory!
God defend it! there is need,
For the demon of pollution
Campeth on the banks of Tweed.

* * * * * *

Where were fought the fights of freedom,
And the stirring songs were sung,
Which the heart and arm of Scotland
Moved as with a trumpet tongue.

Count the forces of the upstart,
Smoke-begrimmed and dimly seen,
On and under the horizon,
Blackening the blue and green.

Idle task! they multiply
Faster than the pen can score,
Legion crowding upon legion,
Like the waves that scourge the shore.

Read the motto on their banner:
Self and Pelf! so apt the scroll;
Not an apter on the headstone,
Nor on knightly bannerol.

Pelf and Self! the double demon!
From its clutch, good God, deliver!
Save from taint of the defiler,
Saviour! save our dearest River!

For the life-blood of our valleys
We entreat on bended knee!

For the Queen of nursing mothers,
God! defend her chastity!"*

There are one or two stanzas in this which might fairly enough be modified. The manufacturers are probably not more bent on pelf and self than other classes of the community. Yet *Tweed and its Prospects* indicates a dire foreboding; while nothing since it was written tends to show that the forecast on the whole was too gloomy. Surely we may yet find some means of reconciling industrial development, on the banks of the Tweed and its tributaries, with public health and comfort and with natural beauty. Light, air, and water are among the elementary needs of man. God has provided them bountifully enough. It is surely the part of public legislation to preserve these intact, against any private interest, however pressing and powerful.

The volume of *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France, with Other Poems*, by A. Lang (1872), contains elegant translations of some very beautiful pieces of the older poets of France. Mr. Lang has, besides, given us some poems of his own, and among these are two lyrics at once sweet and true, entitled *Twilight on Tweed*, and *Sunset on Yarrow*. I give the former:—

* *Songs of the Seasons, and Other Poems.* By Thomas Tod Stoddart. 1873.

"Three crests against the saffron sky,
Beyond the purple plain,
The dear remembered melody
Of Tweed once more again.

Wan water from the Border hills,
Dear Voice from the old years,
Thy distant music lulls and stills,
And moves to quiet tears.

Like a loved ghost thy fabled flood
Fleets through the dusky land;
Where Scott, come home to die, has stood,
My feet returning stand.

A mist of memory broods and floats,
The Border waters flow;
The air is full of ballad notes,
Borne out of long ago.

Old songs that sung themselves to me,
Sweet through a boy's day dream,
While trout below the blossom'd tree
Plashed in the golden stream.

Twilight, and Tweed, and Eildon Hill,
Fair and thrice fair you be;
You tell me that the voice is still
That should have welcomed me.

In 1869 appeared a volume of poems by "J. B." "Selkirk." "J. B." is a Borderer by birth and upbringing; and, though in his volume there is not much local allusion, we can detect the breath of the forest hills in *Retreat;* and the power of the forest legends in *The Yerle's Vow.* But I

am happy to be able to give *A Song of Yarrow* by this author, which shows how deeply and purely that stream of song can even now, in this materialistic age, touch the heart of one of its sons, who is not less distinguished by practical ability in industrial pursuits than by a tender imaginative susceptibility:—

A SONG OF YARROW.

"September, and the sun was low,
The tender greens were flecked with yellow,
And autumn's ardent after-glow,
Made Yarrow's uplands rich and mellow.

Between me and the sunken sun,
Where gloaming gathered in the meadows,
Contented cattle, red and dun,
Were slowly browsing in the shadows.

And out beyond them, Newark reared
Its quiet tower against the sky,
As if its walls had never heard
Of wassail-rout or battle-cry.

O'er moss-grown roofs that once had rung
To reivers' riot, border brawl,
The slumberous shadows mutely hung,
And silence deepened over all.

Above the high horizon bar
A cloud of golden mist was lying,
And over it a single star
Soared heavenward, as the day was dying.

No sound, no word, from field or ford,
  Nor breath of wind to float a feather,
While Yarrow's murmuring waters poured
  A lonely music through the heather.

In silent fascination bound,
  As if some mighty spell obeying,
The hills seemed listening to the sound
  And wondering what the stream was saying.

What secret to the inner ear,
  What happier message was it bringing,
What more of hope and less of fear,
  Than man dare mix with earthly singing?

Earth's song it was, yet heavenly growth—
  It was not joy, it was not sorrow,
A strange heart-fulness of them both
  The wandering singer seemed to borrow.

Like one that sings and does not know,
  But in a dream hears voices calling,
Of those that died long years ago,
  And sings although the tears be falling.

Oh Yarrow! garlanded with rhyme!
  That clothes thee in a mournful glory,
Though sunsets of an elder time
  Had never crowned thee with a story,

Still would I wander by thy stream,
  Still listen to the lonely singing,
That gives me back the golden dream
  Through which old echoes yet are ringing.

Love's sunshine! sorrow's bitter blast!
  Dear Yarrow, we have seen together.

For years have come and years have past,
Since first we met among the heather.

Ah! those indeed were happy hours,
When first I knew thee, gentle river;
But now thy bonny birken bowers
To me, alas! are changed for ever.

The best, the dearest, all have gone,
Gone like the bloom upon the heather,
And left us singing here alone
Beside life's cold and winter weather.

I, too, pass on, but when I'm dead,
Thou still shalt sing by night and morrow,
And help the aching heart and head
To bear the burden of its sorrow.

And summer flowers shall linger yet,
Where all thy mossy margins guide thee;
And minstrels, met as we have met,
Shall sit and sing their songs beside thee.

The old note of that

"pleasing song
Of him who sad beneath the wither'd branch
Sat of Traquair, complaining of his lass,"*

has quickened the creative feeling of one who can render in musical verse both Highland grandeur and Lowland pathos. It is thus Principal Shairp sings of *The Bush aboon Traquair*, as freshly as it were for the first time:—

* Hamilton of Bangour.

"Will ye gang wi' me and fare
To the bush aboon Traquair?
Ower the high Minchmuir we'll up and awa',
This bonny summer noon,
While the sun shines fair aboon,
And the licht sklents gently doon on holm and ha'.

And what would ye do there,
At the bush aboon Traquair?
A lang dreich road, ye had better let it be;
Save some auld skrunts o' birk
I' the hill-side lirk
There's nocht o' the warld for man to see.

But the blythe lilt o' that air,
'The bush aboon Traquair,'
I need nae mair, it's eneuch for me;
Ower my cradle its sweet chime
Cam' soughin' frae auld time,
Sae tide what may, I'll awa' and see.

And what saw ye there
At the bush aboon Traquair?
Or what did you hear that was worth your heed?
I heard the cushies croon
Through the gowden afternoon,
And the Quair burn singing doon to the Vale o' the Tweed.

And birks, saw I three or four,
Wi' grey moss bearded ower,
The last that are left o' the birken shaw,
Whar mony a simmer een
Fond lovers did convene,
Thae bonny bonny gloamins that are lang awa'.

Frae mony a but and ben,
By muirland, holm, and glen,
They cam yin hour to spen' on the greenwood sward;

But lang hae lad and lass
Been lying 'neath the grass,
The green green grass o' Traquair kirkyard.

They were blest beyond compare,
When they held their trysting there,
Amang the greenest hills shone on by the sun;
And there they wan a rest,
The lownest and the best,
I' Traquair kirkyard when a' was dune.

Now the birks to dust may rot,
Names o' luvers be forgot,
Nae lads and lasses there ony mair convene;
But the blithe lilt o' yon air,
Keeps the Bush aboon Traquair
And the luve that ance was there, aye fresh and green."

There is one writer who, though he has not expressed himself in verse, yet has so clearly entered into the soul of the Border scenery, that his prose is instinct with the power of its peculiar poetry. The author of *Rab and his Friends*—as genuine a piece of Scottish life and character as is to be found in our literature, and full of the artlessness of art—has limned the scenery of the Border land with exquisite touch and felicity of phrase in his *Minchmuir* and *Enterkin*—pictures that bespeak alike power of eye and pathos of heart.

It would not be easy to estimate or express the degree of refined and elevated feeling in many minds, of which the Ballads and Songs now passed in review have been the

source. Some men have felt their power so strongly that we cannot look for an increase in the intensity of the gratification, or a greater quickening of the poetic faculty than they have already caused. But we may hope that the purifying and refining power of Border Song may be greatly extended, especially among those born in the district, to whom it comes as a natural heritage. The degree in which a Borderer appreciates the poetry of his native hills and vales may be taken as the measure of his culture. The Borderer who is entirely impervious to its influence, if there be any such, may fairly be given up as incapable of education in any true sense of that word.

As a distinctive form of poetry, Border Song has a permanent place in our national literature. It is simple, outward, direct, not without art, especially in its later forms, yet powerful mainly because it is true to feelings of the human heart, which are as universal and permanent as they are pure; and because it is fresh as the sights and sounds of the varied land of hill and dale, of purple moorland and clear sparkling streams, which it loves so well. It is a form of poetry with which we can at no time dispense, if we are to keep our literature healthy; and it is especially needed in these times. For we have abounding morbid introspection and self-analysis; we have greatly too much of the close hot atmosphere of our own fancies and feelings. We depend for our interest in literature too much on the trick of incident or story, too little on character which embodies primary

human emotion. We need, as people did at the commencement of the century, some reminder of the grandeur of a simple life, of the instinctive character of high motives and noble deeds, of the self-satisfying sense of duty done; and the close work-shops of our literary manufactures would be all the better for a good fresh breeze from the hills and the holms of the Teviot and the Yarrow.

THE END.

ERRATA.

Page 2, line 20—after "nor," read "apart from them."
Page 14, line 6—for "barrow," read "barrows."
Page 48, line 12—after "*treubh*," add "meaning tribe."
Page 55, line 14—for "show," read "shows."
Page 89, line 22, at "hero," add footnote "† *Ibid.*, p. 23."
Page 90, line 19—for "1128," read "1138."
Page 123, line 5—delete "by St. Serf."
Page 147, line 6—for "Odin," read "Orm."
Page ,, line ,,—for "Eilaf," read "Ellaf."
Page 153, line 3—for "Brunetland," read "Burnetland."
Page 158, line 26—for "egus," read "ejus."
Page 160, line 3—for "remains," read "remain."
Page 195, line 13—for "anstrali," read "australi."
Page 297, line 9—for "though," read "through."
Page 300, line 19—for "matron's," read "matrons."

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